



PHD

The Impact of Organisational Socialisation on the Dynamics of Interns' Workplace Commitment

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The Impact of Organisational Socialisation on the Dynamics of Interns' Workplace Commitment

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Bath

School of Management

September 2019

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ABSTRACT

The commitment concept has developed for decades, yet there is still confusion and discrepancy about what commitment is, and how and why it develops. Most commitment research has focused on the antecedents and consequences of commitment, and little has been said about the development of commitment. This means, even though it is known ‘what causes what’, it is still not clear ‘how it happens’ in reality. At the same time, the majority of commitment development studies are organisationally focused. We still do not know how multiple commitment bonds could develop, change or end over time. Therefore, this research revisits and challenges the conceptualisation of commitment, exploring the dynamics of multiple commitments, which means the pace of commitment change.

Furthermore, commitment has been widely studied in permanent employment, thus we know little about pre-employment (internships) context. Internship participation has become the best career entry point for graduates and employers (CI, 2018). It represents a critical time for interns to experience the work environment and for employers to develop their commitment to potential employees. During the internship, organisational socialisation (OS) can facilitate learning about the workplace and influence individuals’ commitment (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007). Therefore, this research investigates the impact of organisational socialisation on the dynamics of interns’ workplace commitment. To answer this, a qualitative longitudinal study of a hundred and three interviews was conducted with twenty interns in three professional service firms in the UK.

The thesis consists of a portfolio of three research papers, each taking different perspectives on workplace commitment. The first paper explores the nature of commitment while identifying the targets of commitment. The second paper examines the dynamics of commitment, by investigating how multiple commitments can interact and change over time, and what causes these changes. The third paper addresses the impact of OS on interns’ intention to commit to the organisation, which means their future commitment. It focuses on three OS dimensions (organisation, group, and job), to distinguish between their different impacts on commitment.

This research is one of the first to study the dynamics of multiple commitments and OS in the internship context. It has significant outcomes that contribute to theory and practice. Firstly,

interns' self-commitment influences the motive of their workplace commitment bonds, as they were committing to the targets with the most impact on them. Secondly, I argue that commitment is a conscious decision people make to manage their multiple commitments. It is a dynamic bond that can change at different paces depending on work conditions. Thirdly, individuals experience multiple commitment to different targets, which are classified as proximal and distal targets. Finally, I address the important impact of the job on the interns' intention to commit to the organisation in the future. The research also has several implications that help employers to attract and retain interns, as well as young workers in general.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction:

In this thesis, I am exploring the concept of workplace commitment and challenging the predominant assumption that commitment is a steady bond. Despite the main focus on the organisational commitment in the literature, I argue and show the importance of multiple targets of commitment, and emphasise their interactions and changes over time. To understand the reasons for these changes, I address the influence of organisational socialisation on commitment. I also extend the commitment theory from the traditional employment context into the internship context in order to re-examine and question the concept. I do this by examining the impact of organisational socialisation on the dynamics of interns' workplace commitment. I conducted a qualitative longitudinal study to follow the journey of individuals' multiple commitments during the internship. By that, I offer several original contributions to the knowledge. Firstly, this is the first empirical study which supports Klein, Molloy, and Brinsfield's (2012) reconceptualisation of commitment as a conscious decision that individuals make to manage their multiple commitments. Secondly, I argue that commitment is a dynamic bond that changes at different paces depending on work circumstances. I also address different types of dynamics of commitment. Thirdly, I develop the organisational socialisation theory by identifying the distinct impact of organisational socialisation dimensions (organisation, group, job) on individuals' commitment. Fourthly, I develop the concept of future commitment, examining the interns' intention to commit to the organisation in the future, which is conceptualised in this study as their willingness to return and commit to the organisation. These contributions are not only important for theoretical development, but they also infer several implications related to both the organisations that draw on intern talent pools for valuable human capital, and to the younger generations that represent the future workforce. While I challenge many of the underlying assumptions in the field of commitment, I still argue that research should continue to re-examine the current established perspective of commitment, while assuring its relevance to the future of work.

1.1 Overview:

1.1.1 Commitment:

Commitment is one of the most important work bonds because of its influence on individuals and organisational outcomes such as job performance (Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert, 1996), citizenship behaviour (Morin et al., 2011), knowledge sharing (Swart, Kinnie, Van Rossenberg, & Yalabik, 2014), absenteeism and turnover (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). The concept of commitment in the workplace is still a debatable concept in the field of organisational behaviour (Cohen, 2007; Morrow, 1993). It has been defined as an attachment (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979), an exchange (Wiener, 1982), a consequence of an investment (Becker, 1960; Meyer & Allen, 1991), an involvement (Meyer & Allen, 1991), an obligation (Meyer & Allen, 1991), and a conscious decision (Klein et al., 2012). Despite the increase in attention given to the research of commitment, there is still considerable confusion and disagreement about the nature of commitment.

For decades, the organisation has been considered the main target of employees' commitment (Becker, 1960; Ehrhardt, Miller, Freeman, & Hom, 2011; Jaros, 1997; Joo, 2010; Meyer & Allen, 1984; Meyer & Maltin, 2010; Mowday et al., 1979), determining their desire to stay or leave the organisation. Then, scholars started to pay more attention to other workplace targets of commitment such as managers (Morin et al., 2011), co-workers (Vandenberghe, Bentein, & Stinglhamber, 2004), clients (Morin et al., 2011), and profession (Baruch & Winkelmann-Gleed, 2002; Kinnie & Swart, 2012). These multiple targets could be in conflict (Donnelly, 2011; Gunz & Gunz, 1994), competing for individuals' commitment, or in synergy and overlapping (Donnelly, 2011; Johnson, Groff, & Taing, 2009). Either way, they can all influence individuals' work behaviours (Becker et al., 1996; Bishop, Scott, & Burroughs, 2000; Rofcanin, Las Heras, Bosch, Wood, & Mughal, 2018).

Furthermore, commitment has been viewed as a relatively stable bond that evolves progressively (Beck & Wilson, 2000; Lee, Ashford, Walsh, & Mowday, 1992; Meyer and Allen, 1997; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974). That is why a great deal of research has been focusing on the antecedents and consequences of commitment (Meyer & Smith, 2000; Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001; Somers, 1995). Recently, this view has started to change, as some studies have examined the development of commitment over time, yet, most of them are organisationally focused (Bergman, Benzer, Kabins, Bhupatkar, & Panina, 2013; Solinger, Hofmans, & van Olffen,

2015). Surprisingly, we still do not know how a person's multiple commitments evolve with time, and what can influence this (Klein, 2016). It was interesting for me to understand how commitment bonds can interact, change, and end over time. The aim of the study is therefore to understand the dynamics of workplace commitment bonds, which means the pace of commitment changes, and the antecedents of these changes. This was the beginning of my idea of the research.

1.1.2 Organisational Socialisation (OS):

Prior research indicates that organisational socialisation (OS) could have an enormous impact on the development of commitment (Solinger, van Olffen, Roe, & Hofmans, 2013). OS is the process whereby newcomers acquire knowledge and skills to perform effectively (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The main aim of the process is to facilitate the newcomer's adjustment to the new environment (Brass, 1985; Louis, 1980). Therefore, successful socialisation eliminates ambiguity and stress, improves employee performance, and decreases voluntary turnover (Angle & Perry, 1981; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Reichers, 1986). Socialisation is a process of becoming an organisational insider, thus it affects the strength of the newcomer's bond with the organisation (Lance, Vandenberg, & Self, 2000). Individuals join the organisation with optimistic expectations which are influenced by their educational experiences and employment process (Louis, 1980). Then, when early experiences do not confirm these expectations, this may negatively affect employees' job satisfaction and organisational commitment, as well as increasing the turnover rate in the early employment stage (Porter et al., 1974). Since organisational commitment is a result of the responses to the socialisation experiences (Lance et al., 2000), newcomers' commitment changes rapidly, due to their new experiences in the workplace (Bergman et al., 2013). Therefore, to understand what causes commitment to change, I needed to examine the socialisation process, by studying the impact of OS on the dynamics of workplace commitment.

1.1.3 Internship Context:

Commitment and socialisation have been studied widely in full-time employment, with little attention paid to the internship context. There is, therefore, a gap in our understanding of other contexts. The internship is short-term employment that organisations use as a graduate recruitment and selection tool (Beenen & Pichler, 2014). It enables interns to learn about the workplace and assess their fit with the organisation and job (Carless, 2005). While traditional job applicants make their decision based on an interview process and companies' reputation in the marketplace, interns

have the luxury of working in the organisation for months and then decide whether they fit the work environment or not (Beenen & Pichler, 2014).

Organisations are increasingly relying on internships to find potential talent. In 2019, more than seventy percent of the UK's leading graduates employers offered paid internships (High Fliers Research, 2019). The internship enables organisations to save on both hiring and training costs (Pianko, 1996). Interns as comparatively trained employees, can engage and contribute to the organisation immediately (Dixon, Cunningham, Sagas, Turner, & Kent, 2005), and are expected to experience higher job satisfaction than non-interns (Gault, Redington, & Schlager, 2000). Since the employer-interns relationship is not guaranteed for future employment, it is important to develop the interns' commitment because most organisations would want to hire their interns (Gault et al., 2000).

During the internship, the socialisation process can help individuals to explore the workplace while practising their profession. Learning about the organisational environment in a short period might speed up the pace of their work experiences, which could increase the occurrence of commitment changes. At the same time, interns can experience multiple commitments to different work entities such as supervisors, teams, and projects, which may influence their decision to re-join the organisation. Furthermore, since it is important for employers to convert the interns to potential employees, it is of critical importance to study interns' future organisational commitment. This is conceptualised in this study as their willingness to return and commit to the organisation in the future. In order to explore this future commitment, I refer to their 'intention to commit' (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Triandis, 1979), by examining their 'intention to commit to the organisation'. The internship was therefore the ideal work context to explore individuals' dynamics of workplace commitment as well as their future commitment.

1.2 Research Question:

My main research question is:

'How does organisational socialisation impact the dynamics of interns' workplace commitment?'

The thesis includes three research papers that contribute to answering the research question by answering their own sub-questions (See table 1.1). I answer the research question by addressing different aspects of commitment and socialisation. Firstly, I focus on the nature of individuals' commitment and the targets of their commitment. Secondly, I examine the dynamic changes of

multiple commitments and the antecedents of these changes. Thirdly, I explore the impact of OS on interns' future organisational commitment.

1.3 Methodology:

1.3.1 Research Philosophy:

This research explores the dynamics of interns' multiple commitments by looking to their individual experiences of the organisational socialisation process. Individual experience means their personal interpretation of the process, as each person has a unique perception of reality which is influenced by their background and old experiences. This research adopts the social constructionism approach. As it embraces the individuality of a reality, which helps us understand deeply how the individuals' perception of OS process can influence their commitment to different targets.

“Social constructionism or the social construction of reality is a theory of knowledge of sociology and communication that examines the development of jointly constructed understanding of the world” (Galbin, 2014, p.82). It associates human life existence with social and interpersonal influences (Gergen, 1984). According to social constructionist perspective, the reality is made by individuals instead of objective and external factors. Thus, the researchers' aim is not to look for facts and measure the occurrences of certain patterns, but to appreciate the various meanings that people construct upon their experiences. They should focus on what people feel as individuals and groups, and pay more attention to their verbal or non-verbal communications with each other (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2012). In this case, people's behaviour is explained by understanding the variety of their experiences, rather than looking for external causes. That means, researchers will rely on the participant's views of the events that they are studying. The social constructionism approach helps us to look at the individuals' multiple subjective meanings of the world, considering their different interpretations of reality.

1.3.2 Research Design:

To answer the research question, I conducted a qualitative longitudinal study. A qualitative method allows researchers to explore and get a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). The longitudinal study enables them to answer questions about changes, causes, and consequences, which can contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon (Adams,

Khan, Raeside, & White, 2007; Menard, 2002). The OS and commitment research is mostly quantitative in nature, measuring specific variables, and disregarding the uniqueness of situations and individuals' experiences. Therefore, this research will adopt a qualitative approach, which can provide a richer understanding of the development of commitment during the socialisation process, taking into consideration the individuality of people's experiences, which offers theoretical and practical contributions.

The research took place in three professional service firms (PSFs) in the UK, one financial services, and two engineering consultancies. The commitment of twenty interns was examined (panel study), through semi-structured interviews that were conducted on five occasions throughout the internship programme, with a total number of one hundred and three interviews. Participants were asked broad questions about their experience of OS, as well as their multiple commitments. A response scale of commitment levels (Extremely, Quite a bit, Moderately, Slightly, Not at all) (Klein, Cooper, Molloy, & Swanson, 2014), was used as a way to enable the participants to describe the level of their commitment, which addressed the change of their bond over time. In the final interview, I used the scenario-based method (Mietzner & Reger, 2005) to predict interns' willingness to accept a graduate job offer in their organisation. I gave them a hypothetical job offer from their employers, to discover if they were considering the organisation for future employment. Furthermore, I had several interviews with the graduate recruiters to understand their internship programme's goals, OS plans, and graduate recruitment process.

1.4 Research Papers:

This thesis comprises three independent research papers, which all contribute to answering the main research question. Each paper is examining workplace commitment from different angles. At the beginning, I need to define interns' targets of commitment and understand why they are committed to them. Thus, the first paper is identifying the nature of the individuals' commitment and their workplace targets of commitment. Then, I try to understand how these multiple commitments are interacting and changing over time and what causes this. Therefore, the second paper is examining the dynamic nature of multiple commitments. After that, I move to their future commitment in the third paper, by addressing the influence of OS on interns' intention to commit to the organisation. Table 1.1 represents research papers outlines.

Table 1.1 Research Paper Outline

	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3
Topics	The nature of commitment, and workplace targets of commitment	The dynamics of workplace commitment	Organisational socialisation and individuals' intention to commit
Research sub-questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the nature of interns' commitment? • What are the targets of their commitment in this context? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do interns' multiple commitments change over time? • What are the antecedents for these changes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does OS impact the interns' intention to commit to the organisation?
Methodology		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three professional service firms (PSFs) in the UK • Group of 20 interns • A qualitative longitudinal study • Semi-structured interviews at five points • Total of 103 interviews 	
Main contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Klein et al.'s (2012) reconceptualisation of commitment • Identify self-commitment (Me) • Classify workplace targets: proximal and distal targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify types of dynamics of commitment: unstable and stable • and the antecedents of commitment change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the influence of OS on commitment through fit perceptions • Emphasise the key impact of person-job fit on organisational commitment

1.4.1 Paper 1: “It is all about Me” - An Investigation of Interns’ Workplace Commitment ¹

This paper aims to explore the nature of interns’ workplace commitment, by answering two questions: *‘What is the nature of interns’ commitment?’* and, *‘What are the targets of their commitment in this context?’* I found that interns were self-committed, thus, their workplace commitment was guided by self-interested motives. They were committing to the targets with the most impact on their work, learning, and development. As a result, they perceived the proximity of workplace targets differently, classifying them as proximal targets (e.g. workgroup) with immediate impact; and distal targets (e.g. organisation) with long-term impact. I also argue that interns’ commitment is a conscious decision they make to manage their multiple bonds.

The paper contributes to the discussion of the conceptualisation of commitment, while highlighting the multiple commitments in the internship context, which is absent from the existing literature. It emphasises the important role of proximal targets in individuals’ work experience. This means that employers need to enhance proximal targets’ involvement with interns in order to influence their commitment. Mainly, since the key of interns’ commitment is the targets’ impact on them (Me), organisations need to invest more in this by offering meaningful work and various learning opportunities.

1.4.2 Paper 2: The Dynamics of Interns’ Workplace Commitment ²

This paper explores the dynamic nature of interns’ multiple workplace commitments, which conceptualises the pace of their commitment change. It answers two questions: *‘How do interns’ multiple commitments change over time?’* And *‘What are the antecedents for these changes?’* I found that commitment is a dynamic bond, which can change gradually or abruptly. Since it is challenging to maintain all commitment bonds concurrently, individuals tended to change some of their commitment bonds to support other commitments. The analysis of the data pinpointed two types of dynamics of commitment: ‘Unstable Commitment’ that was changing constantly and related to immediate targets’ impact on individuals’ work; and ‘Stable Commitment’ that was more steady and associated with their intention to commit to the organisation in the future. Different

¹ Awarded as the Best Developmental Paper in Human Resource Management at the British Academy of Management (BAM) conference in 2018 in the UK.

² It was presented at the European Association of Work and Organisational Psychology (EAWOP) conference in 2019 in Italy.

antecedents were causing commitment change. This offers a deeper understanding of the dynamics of interns' commitment and their intention to commit, which do not exist in previous studies.

This paper contributes to the ongoing debate on the dynamic nature of commitment by addressing the different types of dynamics of commitment. I argue that people can experience multiple commitments with different types of dynamics. This answers the call for research on how a person's multiple commitments can interact, develop, and change over time (Klein, 2016). Practically, understanding the dynamics of commitment can assist the human resource managers to support the desired commitment change, toward the desired target, to achieve the desired outcomes. The findings also have implications for the way in which employers retain interns which directly affects their financial commitment to the internship process.

1.4.3 Paper 3: The Impact of Organisational Socialisation on Interns' Intention to Commit³

This paper investigates the impact of organisational socialisation (OS) on the interns' intention to commit to the organisation in the future. I focus on three OS dimensions (organisation, group, job) that represent the main features of the socialisation process. I found that the socialisation process influenced the interns' intention to commit through their perceptions of fit with their jobs, organisations, and groups. I argue that the person-job fit had the main impact on their organisational commitment. The match between the interns' skills and desires with job requirements was strongly influencing their willingness to accept a permanent job offer. This contradicts the predominant assumption that the organisation is the main influence for individuals' organisational commitment.

This paper is one of the first to study organisational socialisation and the intention to commit in the internship context. It contributes to the socialisation research by identifying the different influences of the OS dimensions on socialisation outcomes. This enables employers to support the socialisation process of each OS dimension according to the desired outcomes. These findings show that in order to attract and retain interns, employers need to offer meaningful and challenging jobs as well as effective job socialisation.

³ It was presented at the European Group for Organisational Studies (EGOS) conference in 2019 in the UK.

1.5 Thesis Structure:

The thesis comprises three research papers set out in the following three chapters. All the papers are written in journal publication format, including its own introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion, conclusion, and implications. Finally, there will be a discussion and conclusion chapter for the whole thesis, including an integrative discussion of the research papers, theoretical and practical contributions, as well as the research limitations and suggestions for future research. This is followed by the appendix, which includes the interview guide.

“It is all about Me” - An Investigation of Interns’ Workplace Commitment

Abstract

Internship participation has grown rapidly over the past three decades, as today many graduates and employers consider internships to be the best career entry point. Previous studies have focused on interns’ organisational commitment, but this research aims to explore the nature of interns’ multiple commitments. A qualitative longitudinal study of a hundred and three interviews was conducted with twenty interns in three professional service firms. We found that interns’ were self-committed, which influenced the motive of their workplace commitment bonds. They were committing to the targets with the most impact on their work, learning, and development. Therefore, there were two categories of workplace targets: proximal targets with immediate impact, and distal targets with long-term impact. We argue that interns’ commitment is a conscious decision that they make to manage their multiple bonds. This contributes to the ongoing debate on the commitment concept and addresses the multiple workplace targets in the internship context.

Keywords: Workplace Commitment, Self-Commitment, Targets of Commitment, Internship

2.1 Introduction:

Commitment continues to be a subject of interest for scholars and practitioners due to its association with significant outcomes, such as job satisfaction (Bateman & Stasser, 1984), citizenship behaviour (Morin et al., 2011), and intention to quit (Joo, 2010; Marique & Stinglhamber, 2011). The commitment concept has developed over 50 years, and it has been defined as a result of investment (Becker, 1960), an attachment (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979), and a reciprocal relationship (Wiener, 1982). It has also been represented as a mindset that binds a person to certain actions that are relevant to a target (Meyer & Allen, 1984, 1991). Lately, Klein, Molloy, and Brinsfield (2012) identify it as an individual's conscious choice to dedicate themselves to serving the purpose of a target. Despite the evolution of the commitment concept, there still seems to be considerable confusion and discrepancy about what commitment is, and how and why it develops.

Most of the commitment research has focused on the organisation as a target (Meyer & Allen, 1984; Mowday et al., 1979; Becker, 1960). However, evidence has shown that individuals can simultaneously commit to multiple work targets such as supervisors, clients, and the profession (Kinnie & Swart, 2012; Vandenberghe, Bentein, & Stinglhamber, 2004). Workplace targets are most likely expected to be generally compatible (Donnelly, 2011; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Wallace, 1993). Yet, they can be in conflict, especially when individuals have competing demands between these targets (Donnelly, 2011; McLean Parks, Kidder, & Gallagher, 1998). Individuals' multiple commitments can be influenced by the targets' salience and proximity (Lawler, 1992; Mueller & Lawler, 1999). The more meaningful the interactions that individuals have with targets, the more salient these targets will be (Becker, 2009). Targets might be highly salient in one context, and then irrelevant in another. Thus, multiple commitments can vary on their impact on the individuals' behaviour (Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert, 1996; Bishop, Scott, & Burroughs, 2000).

Furthermore, workplace commitment has been widely studied in traditional employment arrangements, and there has been a limited exploration in the internship context. The organisation has been considered as the main target of commitment for interns (Dixon, Cunningham, Sagas, Turner, & Kent, 2005; Rose, Teo, & Connell, 2014). However, individuals can experience multiple commitments because of their interactions with different work entities. Workplace

targets, such as workgroups, represent the main source for social and instrumental support for interns. Therefore, it is important to highlight interns' multiple targets of commitment in the workplace.

This research contributes to the commitment literature by answering two questions: 'what is the nature of the interns' commitment, and more importantly, 'what are the targets of their commitment in this context?' To answer these research questions, a qualitative longitudinal study was conducted to obtain a richer understanding of the nature of their commitment bonds. The data was collected using semi-structured interviews that took place on five occasions. A total of a hundred and three interviews were conducted with twenty interns, in three professional service firms in the UK. We found that interns were committed to themselves, which was the key influencer of their commitment bonds. They were committed to the targets with the most impact on them (e.g. their work, learning). This persuaded them to perceive targets' proximity differently, considering them as proximal targets with immediate impact (e.g. workgroup), and distal targets with long-term impact (e.g. organisation). The results contribute to the ongoing debate on commitment concept, while highlighting the multiple workplace commitments in the internship context.

Next, we will discuss the previous research on commitment. Then, we will present the research methodology. Finally, we will discuss our findings, followed by the research implications and suggestions for future research.

2.2 Commitment:

Employees' commitment has been of great interest to organisational scholars for years (Becker et al., 1996; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). A major reason for that is the impact of commitment on work outcomes such as job performance (Becker et al., 1996), citizenship behaviour (Morin et al., 2011), knowledge sharing (Swart, Kinnie, Rossenberg, & Yalabik, 2014), intention to quit (Joo, 2010; Marique & Stinglhamber, 2011), absenteeism and turnover (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990).

Scholars have conceptualised and measured commitment differently. Howard Becker (1960) defined commitment using the side-bet theory. This was one of the earliest approaches that presented a perspective of the individual's relationship with the organisation. This means that

employees commit because of investments (side-bets) that they have made by staying in the organisation. The term ‘side-bets’ refers to the accumulation of investments that would be lost if the employee considered leaving the organisation. Becker (1960) claims that over a period of time it becomes more costly for employees to disengage from certain behaviours, such as remaining in the organisation. The risk of losing these investments, especially with the lack of alternative replacements, persuades the person to commit to the organisation.

Then, the concept of commitment has shifted from the instrumental consideration to the psychological attachment toward the organisation. Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian (1974) refer to commitment as identification and a desire to maintain organisational membership. It is “The relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organisation” (Mowday et al., 1979; p.226). Accordingly, commitment was characterised by three factors: “(1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation’s goals and values; (2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation; and (3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organisation” (Mowday et al., 1979; p.226).

After that, scholars have developed the concept to include different perspectives by considering multi-dimensional approaches such as O’Reilly and Chatman (1986), and Meyer and Allen (1984). These two had more impact than other multi-dimensional approaches (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Firstly, O’Reilly and Chatman (1986) consider commitment as a psychological attachment toward the organisation. They argue that the psychological attachment could take three different forms: (1) compliance for specific rewards; (2) identification (or involvement) to establish or maintain a satisfying relationship; (3) internalisation based on the similarity between individual and organisational values. They clearly distinguished between commitment processes, the instrumental exchange, and the psychological attachment. This is where the compliance dimension leads to a shallower attachment to the organisation, and the identification and internalisation dimensions lead to a deeper attachment. However, subsequent research has faced problems distinguishing between identification and internalisation dimensions, and considering compliance dimension as a psychological attachment to the organisation is confusing (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

Second, Meyer and Allen’s (1984, 1991) three-component model (TCM) that defined commitment as a psychological state that binds a person to an organisation. They characterised commitment,

referring to three mindsets: (1) Affective commitment based on individuals' emotions that influences them to stay in the organisation; (2) continuance commitment based on the perceived cost of leaving the organisation; (3) normative commitment based on 'feelings of obligation', which persuades the employee to stay with the organisation. They considered them as "distinguishable components, rather than types, of attitudinal commitment. That is, employees can experience each of these psychological states to varying degrees" (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 3-4). TCM has been the most dominant model of studying commitment (Cohen, 2003). However, some criticism has been stated against the model (Ko, Price, & Mueller, 1997; Vandenberg & Self, 1993). Firstly, it has been debated that affective and normative components are conceptually similar (Lee, 2005). It is difficult to distinguish between their consequences, due to their association with a person's reciprocity (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Secondly, the three components are defined as a 'psychological state' that links the individuals to the organisation, which is not a precise definition (Ko et al., 1997). For instance, affective commitment refers to a person's emotional attachment to an organisation. However, continuance commitment relates to instrumental outcomes that lead to staying or leaving the organisation, which is not related to their feelings toward the organisation (Brown, 1996; Solinger, Van Olffen, & Roe, 2008). Thus, affective commitment represents an attitude toward the target, and continuance commitment represents the expected outcomes of a behaviour, which is the act of staying or leaving (Solinger et al., 2008).

Furthermore, Klein et al. (2012) reconceptualised the employee's commitment as "a volitional psychological bond reflecting dedication to and responsibility for a particular target" (p.137). A person's commitment to a target is defined by a conscious decision to serve the purpose of that target (Solinger, Hofmans, & Olffen, 2015). This argues with the prior research idea that a person can be committed unintentionally without any plan or notice. Commitment is socially constructed within individuals, which means it depends on the person's perception and interpretation of situations. Moreover, the new commitment description differs from the TCM concept. TCM has labelled any type of bond with a target as commitment, while Klein et al. (2012) distinguish the bonds that are based on the absence of alternatives, or the cost of losing the relationship from the commitment. People commit because they choose to, not because they have to. Furthermore, TCM affective mindset overlaps with identification, attachment, involvement meanings, whilst Klein et al. (2012) have not considered them as a commitment. Commitment does not require

persons to merge themselves with the target; it refers to their decision to care about the target. Being committed does not necessarily mean identifying the self through the target. Thus, this new concept of commitment offers a clear and precise definition and eliminates the overlaps in TCM mindsets.

In addition, commitment can represent bonds with different work entities such as supervisors, co-workers (Becker, 1992; Morin et al., 2011; Vandenberghe et al., 2004), clients, and profession (Kinnie & Swart, 2012). Commitment multiplicity can create conflict, as all these targets may compete for the individual's commitment (Donnelly, 2011; Kinnie & Swart, 2012). Though, commitment bonds also might overlap and develop cohesively (Johnson, Groff, & Taing, 2009). Different factors, such as targets' proximity, can influence the employees' multiple commitments. Daily interactions between targets (e.g. workgroup) and employees may develop personal loyalty (Redman & Snape, 2005). Yet, individuals can experience closeness with a target regardless of their physical distance. Becker (2009) claims that the frequency of meaningful interactions can influence the perceived psychological distance of a target. Likewise, similarities in values and interests of employees with the target may cause a cognitive closeness, which can have more impact than physical distance (Mueller & Lawler, 1999).

Similarly, Mueller and Lawler (1999) define a 'cognitive distance' as "the degree of cognitive immediacy and salience that the employee associates with an organisational unit" or target (p.327). The cognitive distance between targets and the organisation may help the employees to distinguish them from global organisational commitment (Redman & Snape, 2005). For example, limited contact with top managers makes them more likely to associate with global commitment, while immediate managers are more often perceived as proximal targets, as they are cognitively closer to the employees and are involved in work interactions (Redman & Snape, 2005). Commitment scholars have introduced profiles of multiple targets to examine their association with work outcomes (Cooper, Stanley, Klein, & Tenhiala, 2014; Swailes, 2004). Becker and Billings (1993) found four distinct profiles: (1) 'committed' (commitment to the organisation, top management, supervisors, and workgroups); (2) 'globally committed' (higher commitment to the organisation and top management); (3) 'locally committed' (higher commitment to supervisors and workgroups); (4) 'uncommitted' (low commitment to all targets). They consider the organisation

and top management as global targets, representing the whole organisation, while classifying supervisors and workgroups as local targets, reflecting their closeness to individuals.

Furthermore, individuals develop stronger affective bonds to proximal targets than to distal targets (e.g. organisation) (Lawler, 1992). They assign the responsibilities of their positive emotions toward working conditions to the proximal targets, which enhances their commitment. Thus, they may identify themselves with their proximal targets, and serve their interests (Reade, 2001). That is why the proximal targets can have a higher impact on employees' behaviour (Becker et al., 1996; Rofcanin, Las Heras, Bosch, Wood, & Mughal, 2018), and can also influence their organisational commitment (Mueller & Lawler, 1999).

Knowing the significant impact on targets of commitment, it is surprising that multiple commitments have mainly been studied in the full-time employee context, but there has been little research concerning interns. The internship is short-term employment that enables employers to attract and employ potential talent. It represents a critical time for employers to develop interns' commitment because most organisations would want to hire their interns (Gault et al., 2000). Most studies have considered the organisation as the leading commitment target for interns (Dixon et al., 2005; Rose et al., 2014), although, their relationship with different work entities may affect their relationship with the organisation. Therefore, this research explores the nature of interns' workplace commitments and addresses their multiple targets of commitment.

2.3 Methodology:

The research took place in three professional service firms (PSFs) in the UK - one financial services firm and two engineering consultancies. PSFs depend on the intellectual skills and offer knowledge-based products and services (Alvesson, 2004). Here, the financial services firm offers different types of insurance and financial investment in markets all over the world. The engineering firms are international leading suppliers of consulting and infrastructure support services. Their aim is to deliver safe, creative, and sustainable places to live and travel. Professional workers usually interact with different parties, such as teams, clients, and business partners. The cross-boundary working environment can influence individuals to experience multiple commitments to different parties besides their organisation (Donnelly, 2009; Kinnie & Swart, 2012). PSFs are one of the highest graduate employers in the UK that rely on internship

programmes as a source to attract and employ potential talent (High Fliers Research, 2019). An internship is a temporary work arrangement that offers a chance for both individuals and employers to gather information about one another (Zhao & Liden, 2011). It represents a critical time for employers to assess the interns' organisational and job fit, and concurrently develop their organisational commitment for future employment.

We communicated with the participants through the graduate recruiters in the firms. We selected a cohort of participants to follow the journey of their workplace commitment during the whole internship. Twenty interns participated in the research. Nine were from financial services firms, and eleven were from engineering consultancy firms (See Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Overview of the Participants

Field	Participants	Department	Type of internship	Internship length
Financial Services Consultancy Firm	Alyssa	Customers Relationship	Compulsory	6 Months
	Emma	Retail & Governance	Compulsory	6 Months
	Ivana	Retail Marketing	Compulsory	6 Months
	Andrea	Financial Services	Compulsory	6 Months
	Jennifer	Retail & Governance	Compulsory	6 Months
	Walter	Customers Relationship	Compulsory	6 Months
	Erica	Finance & Accounting	Optional	1 year
	Rose	Retail Marketing	Optional	1 year
	Claire	Finance & Accounting	Optional	1 year
Engineering Consultancy Firm	Martin	Building Services	Optional	1 year
	Sara	Structures Team	Optional	1 year
	Mark	Structures Team	Optional	1 year
	Ronald	Structures Team	Optional	1 year
	James	Structures Team	Optional	1 year
	Max	Signalling Team	Optional	1 year
	Chloe	Building Services	Optional	1 year
	Omar	Structures Team	Optional	1 year
	Justin	Building Services	Optional	1 year
	Ian	Structures Team	Optional	1 year
	Rema	Architectural Practice	Optional	1 year

Our participants were undergraduate students who joined paid internships for either a degree requirement or work experience and had various duties and responsibilities. In the engineering firms, groups were designing, planning and managing the construction of new buildings and bridges. Interns were working on different projects with different sub-teams. They were involved in tasks depending on their abilities, such as revising construction design, or structure calculations using various software. Some of them worked directly with clients and constructors, while others had to visit sites to check the construction. Mostly, the assignments were dependent on the demands of the project, thus, their work was dynamically changing. However, interns in the financial services firm had specific roles and responsibilities. For example, they worked with clients' retention schemes, answering companies' claims and retaining their contracts.. Interns in the investigation team were analysing the impact of the intermediate companies' performance during the business process. In the marketing team, they were launching the organisation's products through social media as part of their digital campaigns. Sometimes they had other assignments within their department. Mainly, they were working with their workgroups and reporting to their line managers. Hence, their work was more stable and predictable.

The aim was to understand the nature of the individuals' multiple commitments. Therefore, a qualitative longitudinal study was conducted, where the same cohort was examined on multiple occasions (Adams, Khan, Raeside, & White, 2007; Menard, 2002). Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face in five intervals, which lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The total number was a hundred and three interviews. The interviews were conducted throughout the duration of the internship, starting from the first week and finishing on the last week. For the six months' internship, the interviews took place every seventy-five days (a month and a half), while, for the twelve months' internship, the interviews were approximately every three months. Every time, participants were asked about their commitment bonds such as 'who or what they are committed to, and why they are committed to them?' Also, they talked about their interactions and involvement with workplace targets. To describe the level of their commitment bonds, we used a response scale of commitment levels (Extremely, Quite a bit, Moderately, Slightly, Not at all) (Klein, Cooper, Molloy, & Swanson, 2014). It assisted us to articulate any changes that could occur to their commitment over time. In each interview, they needed to address the targets of their commitment and select the level for their commitment from the scale. Then, they justified their selection and explained any changes in their bonds.

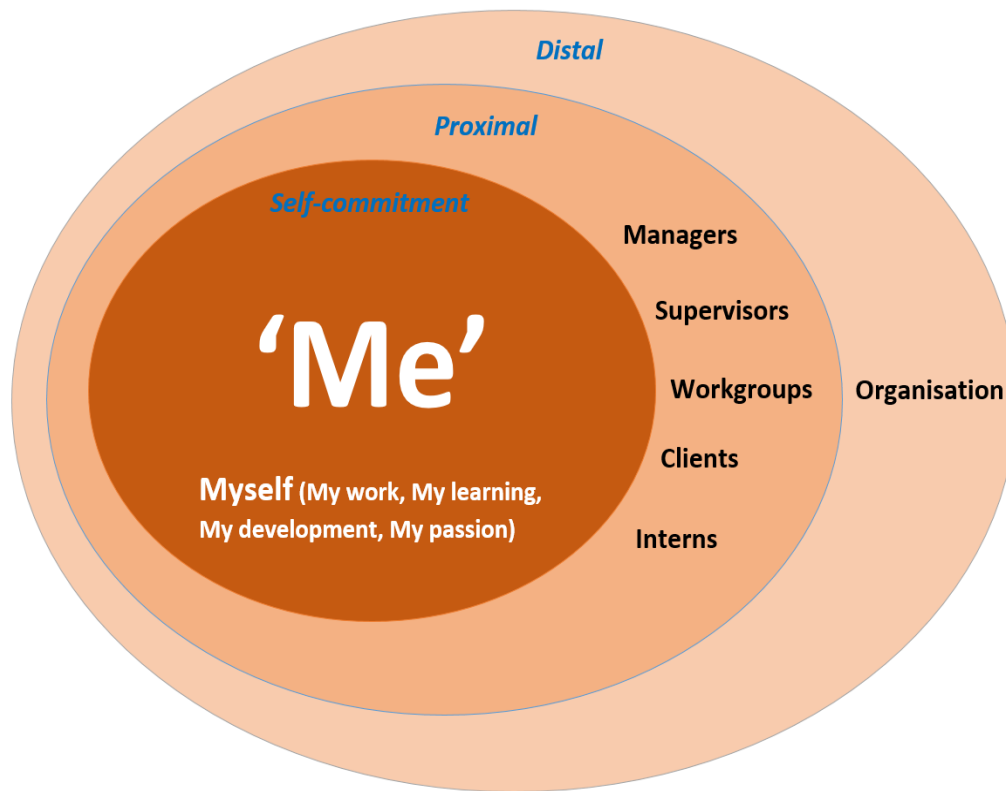
For the analysis, we referred to the abductive approach to gain a theoretical understanding, while constantly comparing the theory and new empirical data (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). The data analysis process went through two phases; the theoretically driven phase, where we refer to the commitment literature, then, the data-driven phase, to generate codes and themes from the data. The analysis process began with reading the interviews in an individual case narrative style, viewing the individual journey through all the interviews. Each case was reviewed indepth independently. Then, all cases were reviewed in comparison with each other (Lewis, 2007; Saldaña, 2003). The thematic analysis enabled us to identify the main themes across cases (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We used Nvivo software for the coding process.

To understand the nature of individuals' commitment, we identified their targets of commitment, then, sought to recognize the motives behind their commitment to each target. We also analysed the reasons for any commitment change. To achieve that, we referred to the participants' responses about the development of their commitment, as well as their socialisation experiences with each workplace target. We found that interns were self-committed and that influenced their workplace commitment. They were committing to the targets with the most impact on their work, learning, and development. As a result, they perceived targets' proximity differently according to their impacts.

2.4 Findings:

Our aim is to explore the nature of interns' workplace commitment, and address the targets of their commitment. We found that interns were self-committed, and that influenced their decision to commit to workplace targets. Their commitment bonds were influenced by the impact of targets on them, whether through their work or learning and development. Accordingly, targets' proximity was perceived differently and was classified as (1) proximal targets (e.g. workgroups) with immediate impact; (2) distal targets (e.g. organisation) with long-term impact. Therefore, interns' commitment can be represented as a circle of layers (shown in figure 2.1): firstly, their self-commitment (Myself/Me) as the centre of their commitment, next, proximal, then distal targets. Table 2.2 then shows interns' comments on their multiple commitments. Next, we represent our findings in two sections: the nature of interns' commitment, and their targets of commitment.

Figure 2.1: Interns' Targets of Commitment



2.4.1 The Nature of Interns' Commitment:

The analysis shows that interns were primarily committed to themselves. Sometimes they said, "I'm committed to Myself", but other times they called it "My work, My learning" which all goes back to 'the self'. To understand the concept of the self, William James (1890) defines it as everything we are tempted to call by the name of me that we feel and act about it as we act about ourselves. My children, my home, my reputation, my fame, my work - all are invested emotionally by me, as well as presented as part of me.

"In its widest possible sense a man's Self is the sum total of all that he CAN call his" (James, 1890, p.291)

James classifies the multiple selves within the empirical self or 'Me' into three components: the material self (tangible things, people, and places that carry the label my or mine), the social self (different selves depend on different social roles), and the spiritual self (psychological self, like a

person's ability, attitude, emotions, interest, and motives, which are owned by the self) (Brown, 1998; Levin, 1992).

In this study, interns were experiencing different selves within the work context such as my work, my development, my passion. However, in other contexts, like at university, they may experience other selves, such as my course, my grades, and my degree. It is essential to understand the concept of multiple selves because interns' commitment to themselves was represented by their commitment to the multiple selves, which can be referred to as the 'Me'. For example, they explained their commitment to themselves as a commitment to their learning and development.

committed to myself...it means my self-development, so it's making sure I take part in like the learning things... making sure...I do as much like training sessions. (Jennifer, Interview-3)

Likewise, their commitment to their work referred to their self-commitment.

I think I am committed to doing a good job... because it's a bit like it reflects upon me. (Claire, Interview-2)

I'm committed to the intern project because I'm the intern project manager...I want to make sure we do a good job and second of all like it's going to look badly on me if we don't do a good job because I'm supposed to be managing it. So I think it's kind of personal. (Jennifer, Interview-2)

Interns' self-commitment (Me) was the centre of their commitment, thus, they were more self-focused. Since they had a short period of time to experience the workplace, they needed to use their time consciously by focusing on themselves and their own needs.

there is a sort of a selfish angle of being an intern...because you are here to sort of use everyone as much as possible to learn as much. (Ivana, Interview-2)

I am a bit more selfish because I want to take the most of it while I'm still here, so I want to find more time to do my learning and meet more people and have a big network. (Justin, Interview-4)

They understood that they were not permanent members of the organisation. Thus, they rather focused on themselves than investing in their relationships with others. For example, Martin was not keen to put in any effort to develop relationships with his colleagues. He said:

I've not got loads of time to be thinking, 'I want to spend it with these people and get to know them,' especially when it's such a short term thing... If it was permanent, there would be more incentive to get to know the people you're with. (Interview-3)

They intended to utilise their limited time in the organisation carefully to get the best out of their internship. They also tried to focus on their learning and development in order to gain more future opportunities.

[committed to my learning] yeah for myself because that I can use these skills, like after I'm done, if I really understand it...it could benefit me in the future. (Claire, Interview-3)

Additionally, interns were encouraged to focus on their development and act proactively by getting involved in the work. This also influences their self-commitment and their dedication to contribute to the 'Me'.

They've very much encouraged you to be a bit selfish... [they told us] while you're here, make the most of it. Go speak to everyone you can, go on as much training as possible and I think that has rubbed off on how I've thought about things so I have tried... do something that is going to be a bit more beneficial for myself. (Ivana, Interview-3)

All of that had a major influence on their workplace commitment bonds. The analysis shows that the motive of interns' commitment to work entities (e.g. supervisor, team) was their perception of targets' impact on the 'Me', which could be shown as offering informal learning, work facilitating, or providing feedback. It could also include being involved with the team in a project or working directly with the manager. All of that could have an impact on their work performance, learning, and assessment. This means targets' impact on the 'Me' (e.g. my work, my development) was the key influencer on interns' commitment. For instance, they were committed to their managers/supervisors because they relied on them the most for work guidance.

Within work [commitment], I think it's your manager or the person who's training you that becomes the closer aspect, because they're the person you have the most contact with, they're the person you're supposed to go to if there's a problem... I would say, as an intern and someone who's just started, you're quite reliant on them for the role and as an individual. (Emma, Interview-1)

Similarly, the team had a significant impact on interns' work and learning that encourages them to commit to their teams.

[committed to my team] because you need to be able to work together as a team, so I might need to ask for a bit more help or for a favour... I wouldn't say it was a purely selfish thing, but it does have something to do with the fact that...they have been very helpful and if I have needed the support then they have willingly given it. (Rema, Interview-2)

Moreover, any changes that occurred to the work circumstances, such as completing a project, could change the expected impact on the targets, which change the interns' commitment to those targets. For instance, Ronald became uncommitted to his supervisor after he started working independently.

I have taken on a few activities of my own type thing and my own projects that I have followed up on and dealt with and therefore... I am becoming a bit more independent, I don't need him as much I guess. (Ronald, Interview-4)

He described that his commitment to his project (my work) makes him commit to the people involved in that project. Therefore, switching to other projects would lead to changing his commitment bonds.

If one day my boss [project leader] changed and I actually ended up working for someone else, I guess I wouldn't go up to my old boss and say, "Is there anything I can help you with?" because now I've moved on and now I'm doing something different. So, it's not really the person, it's more the project. (Ronald, Interview-2)

This suggests interns were constantly assessing the targets according to their impact on the 'Me', meaning, their impact on 'my work', 'my learning', and 'my future career'. Accordingly, they decided the amount of responsibility and dedication they were willing to offer each target. Since it is difficult to commit to all targets, due to the limitation of the individual's resources (e.g. attention, time, and effort), interns tend to focus on the bonds that are currently contributing more to them. For example, Alyssa explained the shift of her commitment to her manager rather than the team.

recently I've been doing a lot of projects for my manager...so that was my priority...and then team...because even if I do offer them help...it's not as important as my line manager, so it has shifted slightly...it depends on the day or on the week, but right now, I'd put my manager as a priority, and then the rest, because all my projects go directly to her...so I think that's why she's on the first place now. (Alyssa, Interview-3)

Targets' contributions to the 'Me' are affected by work circumstances, which are changeable with time, causing the participants' commitment to change. It may change rapidly or gradually, depending on the individuals' decision whether to maintain or change the commitment. Interns were shifting their commitment, according to the targets' impact on them, and the change happened abruptly, or progressively.

2.4.2 Targets of Commitment:

Interns were committed to different work targets, such as supervisors, workgroups, and organisations, which had different impacts on their work experiences. Some targets were interacting and influencing their work on a daily basis, such as managers and workgroups, while others had a less direct impact, such as the organisation. Therefore, they perceived some targets as more proximal than others, due to their immediate impact on them. Becker (2009) believes that “perceived frequency of meaningful interaction as a key conceptual indicator of psychological distance” (p.163). The nature of the targets’ impact can influence the individuals’ perception of the targets’ proximity. For example, clients would be considered as a distal target because of their physical distance, but in this study, they were perceived as proximal targets due to their direct impact on the interns’ work.

I would say the clients probably are a big deal because they are essentially my key work targets, so if I don’t care or don’t work well with my clients, there will be an impact on me. (Alyssa, Interview-2)

Proximal targets had the advantage of daily interactions with the individuals, which led to a more immediate impact on them. This had an influence on their commitment bonds.

I think those are all entities [line manager & team] that I have a tie with and that have an influence on how I do my job... the social aspect of the job can be important as well, because if you don’t get along with your team...or the people that you need to work with, it’s going to make it really difficult. (Emma, Interview-2)

I think she [supervisor] has been nice to me. She does not make me feel like an intern. She has given me good work... and she invited me along to like meetings, some interesting meetings that I didn’t have to, necessarily need to be invited to and she keeps me in the loop and things. (Rose, Interview-2)

Their relationship with the proximal targets could impact their work experience, which encouraged them to commit to those targets.

I think the people [team] help. So they like encourage you and they are always checking... If I don’t like the task, then they would like find me something else to do... I would rather get along with the team and then that leads to work that I enjoy. (Erica, Interview-3)

The organisation was perceived as a distal target. During the interviews, most of them did not address their commitment to the organisation. They possibly could not define their organisational

commitment, as it was not clear to them how they could be committed to the whole organisation, and whether it was symbolic of the workplace or the members. The question being, what does their organisational commitment mean, and how can they impact the organisation? That is why Alyssa was confused about identifying her organisational commitment.

It's hard to say because I work with my team and how do I say I'm committed [to the organisation]? (Alyssa, Interview-2)

Later, she tried to associate her organisational commitment with her commitment to the manager, as her work with the manager will somehow impact the organisation.

I can't offer help to the whole company... I think it's in the background of all of them because they are all a part of the company... when I do work for my manager, it's also directly for the company as well, so it's quite inter-correlated. (Alyssa, Interview-3)

Others thought that as interns they could not impact the organisation because they did not have any power or senior responsibilities. They were also staying in the organisation for a short period of time. Thus, they were wondering how their organisational commitment would affect the organisation.

I'm in student placement and therefore I'm not getting up to do anything big, I'm not like a partner of the company who has a financial interest. I'm very much at the bottom of the scale. (Ronald, Interview-3)

They believed that the organisation would not affect them in the present, but would instead affect them in the future, when they apply for a graduate job. Therefore, the organisational commitment was associated more with their future commitment, and their willingness to re-join the organisation permanently.

The organisation doesn't really affect me until I want a grad role, so that would be a long term thing for me. More immediate would be my manager and my colleagues. (Ivana, Interview-1)

Still, some interns experienced an organisational commitment, possibly due to the background of their workplace commitment. This was shown in their positive perceptions of the organisation and their intention to consider it for a graduate job. Hence, the organisation was perceived as a distal target with indirect and long-term impact on them.

2.5 Discussion:

This research investigates the nature of interns' workplace commitment. The findings show that interns' self-commitment was the centre of their commitment, which influenced their bonds with workplace targets. They were committed to the targets that had an impact on them (Me) (e.g. my work, my learning). Accordingly, there were two categories of targets of commitment: proximal (with immediate impact), and distal (with indirect and long-term impact). We argue that interns' commitment is a conscious decision that is influenced by their self-interest.

2.5.1 The Nature of Interns' Commitment:

Interns' were self-committed, which was shown through their commitment to their work, projects, learning, and development, thus, their workplace bonds were guided by self-interested motives. They tended to behave in an individualistic way rather than a collectivistic way. Individualists focus on self-interests, personal development, and they become a member of a group, as long as it is satisfying their own goals. Collectivists focus on group-based interests and collective benefits (Ramamoorthy & Flood, 2004).

Different reasons influenced interns' individualistic behaviour. First, the temporary nature of employment in an internship context. Interns had limited time to explore the workplace, learn their jobs, and assess the organisation for future employment. Achieving all of this in a short time influenced them to act in an opportunistic way, to get the best out of everything. Furthermore, they were aware that their limited time in the organisation meant they would not be able to witness or benefit from the achievement of groups' goals. Thus, they were self-committed and focusing on their own needs and goals.

Second, HRM practices encouraged interns' individualistic behaviour. Most of the HRM practices were designed and implemented specifically for the internship. For instance, interns had their own induction programme, training, performance assessment, and feedback. One of the organisation offered a 'personal branding' workshop for interns, teaching them how to manage their self-representation and gain personal development opportunities. All of that made them believe that they were not truly part of the group and that their performance and achievements did not depend on collective progress. This promotes an individualism orientation, emphasising on self-interests (Cho & Yoon, 2009; Ramamoorthy & Carroll, 1998).

However, being self-focused could be their trait as a younger generation. For instance, the millennial generation (was born from 1981 to 2000) (Munro, 2014) is known as the ‘generation Me’ because they are highly self-focused and endorse narcissist personality traits (Twenge, 2013; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). Thus, they are less committed to their employers and more focused on their own needs, especially, in their early careers (Buckley, Viechnicki, & Barua, 2015; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002).

Moreover, interns were committing to the targets with the most immediate impact on them, which were changing according to work circumstances. To understand the nature of this bond, we refer to the commitment concept in the literature. Firstly, interns’ commitment cannot be considered as an attachment (Mowday et al., 1979), or identification (Meyer & Allen, 1991) relationship, simply because no emotional attachment was involved, and there was no form of ‘oneness’, where the target becomes part of the person’s self-concept and image.

Secondly, it cannot be considered as an investment like Becker’s (1960) side bet, or Meyer and Allen’s (1991) continuance concepts, where the cost of losing a valuable investment forces a person to continue in a relationship. This view is more applicable to permanent employees because it relates to long-term investment, unlike interns who are working temporarily in the organisation, and have less time to create valuable investments.

Interns were committing for instrumental reasons, bonding with the target that has an impact on their work and development. However, they did not need to perform a specific behaviour (commitment) to achieve the desired outcomes. Therefore, their commitment cannot be considered as an instrumental relationship. Likewise, it is not an exchange relationship, which is a result of an obligation to reciprocate to retain received benefits from the target (Barnard, 1968; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Actually, interns did not experience mutual exchange with targets because they did not need to or *have to* commit. They were committing by *choice* to the target that had an influence on them. For example, they committed to the project team because they believed that their relationship with the team could affect the project outcomes.

Our findings show that interns’ were willing to dedicate themselves and offer their time and effort to the targets with the most impact on them. Therefore, it was their decision to commit to the targets, which could change according to their will. This supports Klein et al.’s (2012) view of commitment as a conscious decision that people make to manage their multiple commitments.

This view of commitment is relevant within the internship context, which has a temporality nature. Interns are working temporarily in the organisation; thus, they have less time to create valuable investments or develop emotional attachments. Therefore, the nature of commitment could vary depending on the work context.

2.5.2 Targets of Commitment:

We found two main categories of targets of commitment: proximal (e.g. supervisor, workgroup) and distal (e.g. organisation). This classification was according to the interns' perception of the targets' proximity. Proximal targets were perceived with more closeness because of their immediate impact on individuals. Their contributions to individuals' work experiences were more salient than other targets. The organisation were viewed as a distal target with indirect and long-term impact. Interns could not recognise the impact of the organisation on them at the present moment. They thought it would affect them later, as job applicants. The organisation did not exist in their daily actions, and was overshadowed by the proximal targets, such as workgroups. At the same time, they could not realise as interns with low responsibilities, how they could benefit and impact the organisation. Therefore, interns were more likely to commit to proximal targets, due to their obvious impact on them (Me).

Commitment research has addressed the influence of targets' proximity on individuals' commitment (Lawler, 1992; Mueller & Lawler, 1999). With physical proximity, targets have an 'interaction advantage' which enhances their commitment (Lawler, 1992). Yet, there is no assurance that spending time with someone would result in psychological meaningful events. Becker (2009) considers perceived meaningful interactions as an indicator of psychological distance. Individuals see a target as proximally located when they experience more meaningful interactions with that target. For example, employees can feel closer to someone, regardless of their physical distance, such as working with a team which is located in another office. The psychological distance of targets can affect their bonds with individuals (Becker, 2009). Thus, employees distinguish between their commitment to the 'distal' targets (organisation) and to 'proximal' targets (workgroup) (Lawler, 1992). Likewise, our analysis shows that the immediate impact of proximal targets increased their closeness to individuals (e.g. clients). However, the organisation was perceived as distal targets due to the absence of an actual impact, which influenced the interns' decision to commit to workplace targets.

Moreover, commitment scholars have classified different profiles of employees' multiple targets of commitment (Cooper et al., 2016; Swailes, 2004). For instance, Becker and Billings (1993) consider employees who are committed to the organisation and top management as 'globally committed', and the ones who commit to their supervisors and workgroups as 'locally committed'. This classification of targets agrees with our findings, considering the organisation as a distal (global) target, with supervisors, and workgroups as proximal (local) targets. However, we do not address them as profiles where individuals (un)commit to them as clusters. The aim of our classification is to define targets' proximity according to interns' perception of their impact, as it was affecting their commitment bonds. We consider individuals' multiple commitments as independent bonds that might interact and influence each other.

At the end, interns' self-commitment was the driving force for workplace commitment bonds. Their commitment decision was influenced by the targets' impact on them (Me). This created two categories of workplace targets: proximal and distal. These findings offer us a deeper understanding of the commitment concept, while addressing the workplace bonds in internship context.

2.6 Conclusion and Implications:

This research aims to understand the nature of the interns' workplace commitment, while addressing the targets of their commitment. We found that interns' self-commitment was the main influencer of their workplace bonds. They tended to commit to the targets with the most impact on them (Me). As a result, they perceived the proximity of workplace targets differently, classifying them as proximal and distal targets. Our results have several theoretical and practical implications that contribute to commitment literature.

First, we address the individuals' self-commitment, and how it can be shown through their commitment to their work, learning, and development. We explain how interns' commitment was guided by self-interested motives, thus, their decision to commit was affected by the targets' impact on them. This offers a deeper understanding of the meaning of individuals' self-commitment, and its impact on their workplace commitment, which is underdeveloped in existing research. This also enables employers to comprehend how to influence individuals' commitment during the internship.

Second, we argue that interns' commitment was a decision they made to dedicate themselves to work for the benefit of the targets. Different antecedents might influence individuals' decisions to commit and maintain their bond. In this case, it was the targets' impact on interns (Me). The temporality setting of the internship context drive individuals to focus on their own self-interest, and intentionally invest in relationships that, for example, foster their career development. The time was inadequate to develop an emotional attachment to others or even create a valuable investment at work. However, other conceptualisations of commitment which define it as an investment outcome (Becker, 1960; Meyer & Allen, 1991), an exchange (Wiener, 1982), or an attachment (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979) could be more relevant within a longer employment context. This means that the nature of commitment could vary depending on the work context. Therefore, we cannot generalize a particular view of commitment to be relevant to all work contexts. This is a valuable contribution not only to the HR theory but also to the practice. Identifying the nature of commitment according to the work context can enable managers to determine how to manage effectively employees' commitment, and support the desired bonds to achieve the preferred outcomes.

Third, the analysis reveals that the proximal targets of commitment (supervisors, workgroup) were more salient than the organisation. This shows the important impact of proximal targets on individuals' work experience. This is a valuable contribution to commitment research in the internship context since the organisation has been viewed as the main target of the intern's commitment (Dixon et al., 2005; Rose et al., 2014). This has implications for employers, as they need to enhance proximal targets' involvement with interns in order to influence their commitment. They can provide more meaningful interactions with interns, such as offering mentors to facilitate individuals' adjustment in the work. Embracing teamwork and knowledge sharing in the workplace might increase the positive impact of proximal targets on interns, which can improve their commitment.

In addition, we state that the key to the interns' commitment is the targets' contribution to the 'Me' (e.g. my learning). Therefore, the organisation needs to invest more in this, by offering meaningful and challenging work, and a socialisation process that provides various learning opportunities. This can enhance interns' workplace commitment, and their willingness to re-join the organisation in the future. Mainly, HRM practices can facilitate this by, firstly, creating interesting jobs that

offer autonomy, skill variety, and challenging responsibilities. Secondly, the recruitment and selection process could ensure the match between individuals' abilities and skills with job demands. The job could offer them the opportunity for future career development. Thirdly, an effective socialisation process, such as training, can develop interns' skills and knowledge and improve their job performance. Finally, individuals need to be able to explore their potential by participating in various assignments. However, employers need to pay attention to the individualism orientation of the HRM practices during the internship. For instance, they could promote collectives-interests, by aligning individuals' goals and achievements with the group's and organisational goals. They also could encourage cooperative behaviours through recognising individuals' contributions to the group's work.

Furthermore, this could reshape how employers should brand their organisations to attract interns. Usually, the aim of employer branding is to promote the organisation in order to attract job seekers (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). However, in order to attract interns, we argue that employer branding should increase the emphasis on the expected impact on individuals, whether through their jobs, learning, or career development. Showing them what they can get from working in the organisation may attract their attention.

Finally, this research creates a foundation from which future research can progress in several ways; one of which would be to widen the investigation to a larger number of participants in different work contexts. All of our participants were undergraduate students, who were working in paid internships. The internship was compulsory for some of them and optional for others, but there were not any differences between the nature of their commitment. However, it would be valuable to explore other work arrangements, such as graduate employees, as their motives for commitment and development of their bonds might differ from interns. Since they are permanent employees, they might want to invest more in their relationships with proximal targets and the organisation, rather than behaving in an opportunistic way. Additionally, there could be some differences in the socialisation process between the engineering and finance firms that could influence the interns' commitment. However, I was not able to explore this because of the limited number of participating firms. This could be considered by future research. Furthermore, other work contexts can be considered, where a wider number of targets are involved in the workplace, such as business

partners and suppliers. This could contribute to the ongoing debate on the commitment concept and provide new insight into workplace targets.

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Table 2.2: Interns' Comments on their Multiple Commitments

Committed to		Comments
Myself (Me)	Myself	<p>I am like quite committed to myself in terms of doing a good job of this internship in specific ways and getting the job out of it at the end and committed to get in you know the right skills to be able to get a good job after Uni and develop myself enough...I would say extremely, putting in the extra effort of work towards it. (Rose, Interview-2)</p> <p>[committed to] Probably myself... I want to prove to myself that I can work really efficiently and well in a working environment because I've never done it before... I just feel like I have to make my mark in the company, produce like from day one, really high quality work, so just by the time I finish or in a couple of months they'll turn round and go, "He was a really good placement student". (James, Interview-1)</p>
	My work	<p>I want to feel that to myself I can do a good job, that I can do this work and that it's something that I can achieve and I also want them to think that I do a good job... if the university ask for feedback... I'd like them to be able to say, yes, he was really good at his job, really dedicated and worked hard in that sense. (Walter, Interview-3)</p> <p>I'm committed to the project I'm working on... I think as an engineer you want to do the best job and you want to be able to walk away from the building you're designing, to have that satisfaction that yeah, I built that, I designed that, I was part of that and did the best job I could. (Ronald, Interview-3)</p>
	My learning and development	<p>I think I'm committed to like the extra stuff as well as extracurricular stuff, not project stuff ... I'm trying to just improve myself as an engineer trying to do as much as I can, just to make the most of my time here... it is really important, like uni [University] teaches you a lot, but I think for working someone like this teaches you far more, like being in the real world and working with real people. (Sara, Interview-4)</p> <p>I'd say I'm committed to myself and getting as much knowledge as possible and connections to people. That's what I decided was the best thing I can now get out of this year, to just work on getting as much industry experience as possible and getting to know different people... [committed] To my self-development. (Mark, Interview-3)</p>

	Building my network	kind of anyone that I have been working with, you kind of have that kind of connection to be able to... if you say two years' time for looking for a job, to be kind of to be able to say, can you give me a reference.... I mean I have tried to as many people as possible... my supervisor for the projects that I was working on first... he is kind of quite involved with the kind of industry side of research and stuff like that, so it is quite useful for me to keep that connection. (Mark, Interview-4)
	My passion	[Committed] I think would be to like do something that I enjoy.... I'm committed to finding the job I wanna do ... thinking about what I can do, how can I apply my skills. (Chloe, Interview-3)
Proximal targets	Managers / Supervisors	<p>She's [line manager] willing to help me, she's willing to try and give me the opportunities to develop in the direction that I would like to as well. (Emma, Interview-2)</p> <p>I think he really cares about me and that I am doing stuff [tasks]...he obviously takes the time out to ask me if I am okay and if I want to do other stuff [tasks] so he is like very considerate. (Claire, Interview-4)</p> <p>Maybe it's subconsciously part of me that says, the better I do work for him. He's sort of like me a person and give me more responsibility and that sort of a thing. (Ronald, Interview-3)</p>
	Workgroups	<p>So I was just hanging around my team a lot more, kind of just got to know people in my team a lot more as well... Because I am conscious that, I am moving [leaving], so... I need to leave a good impression... Because they are the ones who gonna decide basically if I get the job so. (Sara, Interview-4)</p> <p>Team members that I would help as well, because they've been helpful and sometimes even more helpful than she [line manager] is, because they've always been there, so, in a way, if they do need my opinion on anything, I would be happy to help or anything. (Alyssa, Interview-4)</p> <p>Then my team, they haven't really engaged with me that much so again I feel a little bit selfish and that actually I want them to succeed but it doesn't really directly affect me at all. The only way it would affect me is that whether I'm going to be able to say this: success was something I did... But I wouldn't succeed to make my team do well; I would succeed so I've got something to say. (Ivana, Interview-3)</p>

	Clients	The clients are my constant work, so I feel committed to them regardless of any other projects. (Alyssa, Interview-3)
	Other interns	<p>I get along really well with the other interns and that's really nice, because then obviously you've got contacts in other areas of the business that you know and that you can talk to, whether it's professionally or personally, so there is an interest in them as well... So because we have to work together, both for the intern project and because we're the interns and we're in the same position, I think it's quite key for me that we have a good relationship with each other. (Emma, Interview-2)</p> <p>I'm also committed to getting on well with the other interns because... if I didn't get on well with them it might be a bit of a problem. And yeah, I'm doing well with the group project because I think if we do well in that group project it will look well on us as interns from [the organisation's] perspective. (Walter, Interview-2)</p> <p>We have so much stuff that we have to do together that we have to get along and we have to look after each other because we just do so much together as well because of the intern project. I think also part of that like we have to make sure it works and we have to make sure we all get along. (Jennifer, Interview-3)</p>

Distal targets	<p>Organisation [committed] to [the organisation] as a whole, like they seem to want to invest in me, so I kind of feel inclined to make sure that if they're successful, but it's also kind of selfish in the fact that if I do something that could help them I would also get to be the person who got to do that... actually that's kind of selfish because that's me thinking of myself because then I would be the one that did that. (Ivana, Interview-1)</p> <p>I am committed to the company. However, I've only been working for them for two months, so maybe I don't have a very vested interest, as maybe a partner or somebody who owns the company or someone who's worked for them for ten years, has put a lot into the company and therefore wants to see great results out. Whereas I've only been working for two months I haven't really put much in and I've not really received a massive amount back. (Ronald, Interview-1)</p> <p>The company as a whole... although I'm obviously at a very low level of it, I feel like I'm – not expected – but I feel like I should do the best I can for the company in general...There's the side of it in which obviously the people that are more experienced have a greater understanding. I feel I wouldn't be asked, there's not really much expected of me, whereas there's more expected of them. (Mark, Interview-1)</p> <p>The better we do as a company on a particular project, the more likely we're going to get better projects as a result, so if we do really well on some really cool building and the client's happy... and of course that's beneficial for me because, from my perspective...I want to work on interesting things, not just boring stuff. So I think doing well for the company, giving them a good reputation is advantageous for me really. (Ronald, Interview-3)</p>
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The Dynamics of Interns' Workplace Commitment

Abstract

This paper explores the dynamic nature of interns' workplace commitment. It seeks to understand how multiple commitment bonds change over time, and the antecedents for these change. A longitudinal study of a hundred and three interviews was conducted with twenty interns in three professional service firms. We found that the interns experienced two types of dynamics of commitment: 'unstable commitment,' that was changing constantly depending on current work circumstances, and 'stable commitment,' which was more steady and gradually developing, as it was influenced by their intention to commit to the organisation in the future. We argue that commitment is a dynamic bond that can change gradually or abruptly. In this context we identify the different antecedents that lead to commitment change. This contributes to the ongoing debate on the dynamics of commitment. Our findings have implications for the way in which employers retain interns, which directly affects their financial commitment to the internship process.

Keywords: Workplace Commitment, Dynamics of Commitment, Commitment Change, Multiple Targets of Commitment, Internship

3.1 Introduction:

Individuals may commit to many workplace targets, such as managers, workgroups, professions, and organisations (Kinnie & Swart, 2012; Vandenberghe, Bentein, & Stinglhamber, 2004). Those targets could be conflicting or compatible (Chan, Tong-qing, Redman, & Snape, 2006; Donnelly, 2011; Gunz & Gunz, 1994). Yet, individuals need to sacrifice some of their commitments due to the limitation of their resources (e.g. attention, time, and effort). This may make them experience multiple volatile commitment bonds. Therefore, in this paper, we investigate how a person's multiple commitments evolve over time, identifying the pace of commitment changes (dynamics of commitment). Most of the previous studies have considered commitment as a stable relationship that requires key events to provoke change, such as mergers and layoffs (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Vandenberg & Stanley, 2009). Lately, this view has been challenged, as some studies addressed commitment as a dynamic relationship and examined its development over time. However, these studies are mainly organisationally focused (Bergman, Benzer, Kabins, Bhupatkar, & Panina, 2013; Solinger, Hofmans, & Olffen, 2015). This means that little is known about the dynamics of individuals' multiple commitments.

Commitment has also mainly been studied in the context of employment (Becker, 1960; Mercurio, 2015; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Thus, there is a need to know how commitment in pre-employment (internships) impacts on the intention to commit to the organisation. This is important because organisations rely on internship programmes as a source to attract and employ potential talents. The number of internship-programmes on offer at the UK's top employers has been rising sharply over the last nine years (High Fliers Research, 2019). Interns represent a valuable source of potential employees with qualified experience (Gault, Redington, & Schlager, 2000). However, internship is a temporary experience that represents a critical time to develop interns' commitment (Dixon, Cunningham, Sagas, Turner, & Kent, 2005).

Building upon the existing research in the internship context, which focuses on the intern-organisation relationship (Dixon et al., 2005; Rose, Teo, & Connell, 2014), this research explores the dynamic nature of interns' multiple workplace commitments. It answers two questions: 'How do interns' multiple commitments change over time? And what are the antecedents for these changes?' The aim is to understand the change of commitment bonds and the reasons behind that. Studying the antecedents of commitment change will offer not only theoretical contributions but

it also provides insight into how employers might influence employees' workplace commitment, and support the desired commitment change to achieve the preferred outcomes. Therefore, a qualitative longitudinal study was conducted to follow the journey of the interns' commitment during their internship. The data was gathered via semi-structured interviews that took place on five occasions during the internship programme. A total of a hundred and three interviews were conducted with twenty interns, in three professional service firms in the UK. We argue that commitment is a dynamic bond that can change gradually or abruptly depending on the individuals' choices. We found two types of dynamics of commitment: unstable, which changes constantly on a daily or weekly basis, depending on the current targets' impact on the individuals' work; and stable, which is more steady and gradually developing over time, influenced by the individuals' intention to commit to the organisation. We also address the antecedents that cause commitment to change. This paper answers the call for research on how a person's multiple commitments can interact, develop, and change over time (Klein, 2016).

The paper is structured as follows: we begin by discussing the relevant previous research on commitment. We then present our research methodology. Finally, we discuss our findings, before we present the implications of our work for future research.

3.2 Commitment:

Commitment is one of the main work bonds that has attracted organisational scholars' attention for years (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). This is because of its significant influence on employees' job satisfaction (Bateman & Stasser, 1984), performance (Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994), intention to quit (Joo, 2010; Marique & Stinglhamber, 2011), absenteeism and turnover (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Commitment has been conceptualised as a consequence of investment (Becker, 1960), psychological attachment (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979), or exchange relationship (Wiener, 1982). It has been considered as different mind-sets that bind a person to a target (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Recently, it has been defined as a choice that people make to dedicate themselves and work towards the interest of a certain target (Klein, Molloy, & Brinsfield, 2012).

Individuals can experience a commitment to multiple workplace targets such as supervisors, co-workers (Vandenberghe et al., 2004), profession, and clients (Kinnie & Swart, 2012). Some

scholars debate that multiple commitment can lead to a 'zero-sum' game where individuals need to choose one target at the expense of the other (Gunz & Gunz, 1994). The conflicts between the multiple targets may cause problems to both employees and organisations. Although employees' multiple commitments could be overlapping, (Gallagher & Parks, 2001), consonant (Chan et al., 2006), and have synergies (Donnelly, 2011; Johnson, Groff, & Taing, 2009), the multiplicity of commitment does not mean a 'zero-sum' game (Becker, 1992). Yet, it is difficult for individuals to commit fully to all targets, which could lead to a commitment shift. In this respect, it is important to understand how people change their commitment in order to manage their multiple bonds, and how this could increase the dynamics of their commitment.

Most researchers have considered commitment as a psychological bond that takes time to evolve (Beck & Wilson, 2000; Lee, Ashford, Walsh, & Mowday, 1992; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974). They have been measuring commitment at one point in time, mostly six months to a year, to assess its future outcomes (Jaros, 2009). This shows the predominant assumption of commitment as a stable bond that changes as a result of external events and adjusts in a similar manner across workers (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Vandenberg & Stanley, 2009). However, Klein et al.'s (2012) view of workplace commitment as the people's choice to manage their multiple bonds, addresses the dynamic nature of commitment. Commitment can vary depending on the individuals' perception of a target that can be influenced by their emotions, moods, and their interpretations of events (Becker, Ullrich, & van Dick, 2013). Bergman et al., (2013) argue that the rate of commitment change is influenced by organisational events, as the change can be gradual, rapid, or in between. Rapid change results from enormous changes in events, values, or environment, such as mergers and acquisitions, or having a promotion. Time is needed to achieve stability for commitment, although it depends on the frequency and level of changes. Therefore, in the early stage of employment, commitment may develop relatively quickly through a volatile period, then it may stabilise when sufficient experiences occur (Bergman et al., 2013). Lately, some studies have examined the dynamic nature of commitment, although most of them are focusing on organisational commitment (Bergman et al., 2013; Solinger et al., 2015). This means that many aspects of the dynamics of commitment are still not answered, such as how multiple commitments can change with time, how often they can change, and what can cause these changes (Klein, 2016).

In addition, individuals can experience commitment before entering the organisation (pre-entry commitment), due to their values, early expectations, and prior experiences (Mowday et al., 1982). Then, their commitment continues to develop through their experiences in the workplace (post-entry commitment) (Cohen, 2007). Furthermore, individuals may remain committed to their employer, even after leaving the organisation (Breitsohl & Ruhle, 2013), especially, if, by choice, they leave voluntarily - for example, because of a family issue, or to pursue their studies. In this case, they are more likely to maintain their positive perception of the organisation and remain committed (Breitsohl & Ruhle, 2013). When people have a positive experience during their employment, and their decision to leave is not related to dissatisfaction of the organisation, they are more willing to return to the organisation in the future (Shipp, Furst-Holloway, Harris, & Rosen, 2014). Therefore, we aim to explore the individuals' willingness to return and commit to the organisation after completing their internship, which we refer to as 'future commitment'. To achieve this, we predict their behaviours through their 'intentions' (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Triandis, 1979). Organisational behaviour scholars have been using people's 'intention' to predict their behaviours, such as the intention to quit, or performance intention (Joo, 2010; Shore, Newton, & Thornton, 1990). In this paper, we predict the interns' future commitment by examining their intention to commit to the organisation, referring to their own estimated probability of their willingness to return and commit to the organisation in the future.

Moreover, organisations rely on internship programmes for graduate recruitment and selection. However, interns' short-term experience in the workplace represents a critical time for forming an impression of and commitment to the organisation. Previous research on internships has focused on the organisation as the leading target of interns' commitment (Dixon et al., 2005; Rose et al., 2014). Yet, interns can commit to different work targets, such as managers, teams, or projects. For that reason, it is necessary to understand the interns' experience of multiple workplace commitments, and how they may try to manage them. Commitment of full-time employees has been heavily studied. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the dynamics of interns' multiple commitments, identifying the pace of commitment changes, and the antecedents of these changes.

3.3 Methodology:

This research was carried out on three professional service firms (PSFs) in the UK; one financial services, and two engineering consultancies. Professional workers have more opportunities to experience multiple commitments, as they mainly interact and socialise with different work entities (Alvesson, 2004; Donnelly, 2009; Kinnie & Swart, 2012). Importantly, in the UK, PSFs are one of the top graduate employers that offer internships to attract and recruit potential talents (High Fliers Research, 2019). An internship is a temporary work arrangement that allows both individuals and employers to assess each other for future employment (Zhao & Liden, 2011). Interns need to explore the workplace and practice their jobs in a limited period of time. This may influence the variation of their work experiences over time, which could raise the dynamic change of their commitment bonds. Thus, the internship was the ideal work context to investigate the dynamics of workplace commitment bonds. Access to participating firms was through their graduate recruiters who helped us to approach the participants. A cohort of interns was selected, in order for their commitment to be examined during the whole internship programme. All participants were undergraduate students who joined paid internships as part of their degree or for work experience. The sample includes twenty interns; nine were from the financial services firm, and eleven were from the engineering consultancies (See Table 3.1).

The financial services firm provides insurances and financial investments internationally. In this firm, interns work in specific jobs with set duties. For instance, they worked with clients' companies, reviewing their claims and retaining their contracts. Others were investigating the impact of intermediate companies' performance on the business process, while some of them joined the accounting and financial teams. Mostly, interns were working with their line managers and workgroups, thus, they had stable and predictable work. The other two firms are international engineering consultancies, which aim to create safe, smart, and sustainable places to live and travel. The teams in these firms are involved in designing and managing the construction of new buildings and bridges, as well as offering infrastructure support. Interns were involved with different project teams, and working on tasks according to their abilities and skills, such as reviewing the calculations for designs, using special software. Some of them had site visits and others worked directly with clients and contractors. Most of the work was client-driven, which meant it was consistently changing.

Table 3.1: Overview of the Participants

Field	Participants	Department	Type of internship	Internship length
Financial Services Consultancy Firm	Alyssa	Customers Relationship	Compulsory	6 Months
	Emma	Retail & Governance	Compulsory	6 Months
	Ivana	Retail Marketing	Compulsory	6 Months
	Andrea	Financial Services	Compulsory	6 Months
	Jennifer	Retail & Governance	Compulsory	6 Months
	Walter	Customers Relationship	Compulsory	6 Months
	Erica	Finance & Accounting	Optional	1 year
	Rose	Retail Marketing	Optional	1 year
	Claire	Finance & Accounting	Optional	1 year
Engineering Consultancy Firm	Martin	Building Services	Optional	1 year
	Sara	Structures Team	Optional	1 year
	Mark	Structures Team	Optional	1 year
	Ronald	Structures Team	Optional	1 year
	James	Structures Team	Optional	1 year
	Max	Signalling Team	Optional	1 year
	Chloe	Building Services	Optional	1 year
	Omar	Structures Team	Optional	1 year
	Justin	Building Services	Optional	1 year
	Ian	Structures Team	Optional	1 year
	Rema	Architectural Practice	Optional	1 year

Our aim was to investigate the dynamics of multiple commitments, which means exploring how people develop and manage their workplace commitments. We focus on the individuals' perspective, looking into their own interpretations of work experiences that would influence their bond with different workplace entities. A qualitative longitudinal study was conducted to examine a group of interns on five occasions to address the commitment change and understand the reasons behind these changes (Adams, Khan, Raeside, & White, 2007; Menard, 2002). Therefore, semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. We ended up with a hundred and three interviews. The interviews started on the first week of the internship and ended on the last week, while the rest were distributed among the duration of the

internship. With the six months internship, the interviews were planned on every seventy-five days (a month and a half), but with the twelve months' internship, they were conducted approximately every three months.

Participants were asked broad questions about their experience of work activities, their socialisation with different entities, and their multiple commitments. A response scale of commitment levels (Extremely, Quite a bit, Moderately, Slightly, Not at all) (Klein, Cooper, Molloy, & Swanson, 2014) was used as a way to enable the participants to describe the level of their commitment, which addressed the change of their bond over time. At the end of each interview, they needed to mention the work targets that they were currently committed to and select from the scale the level for their commitment. Then, they explained the reason for their selection and the occurrence of any commitment change.

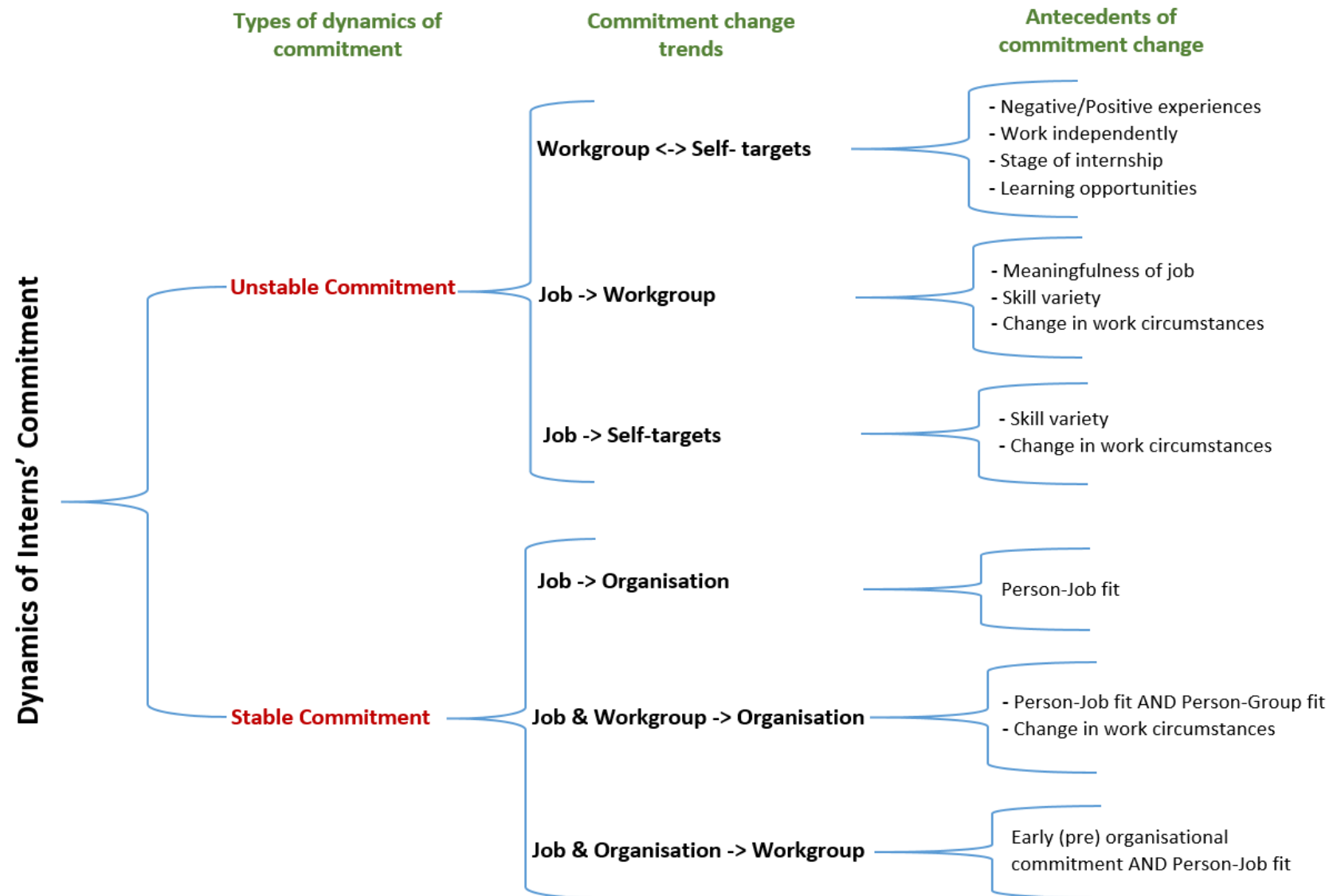
Finally, we used the scenario-based method to predict the interns' willingness to accept a permanent job offer in their organisation. Scenarios are "coherent pictures of possible future," and are useful tools to differentiate from the present and create alternative futures to predict accordingly the possible decisions and actions (Mietzner & Reger, 2005, p.223). In the last interview, we gave the interns multiple scenarios, as we assumed that the employers offered them four different job offers and they had to either accept one of them or reject them all. The job offers gave a variety of options. These were whether to work in: (1) the same job with the same workgroup, (2) a new job with the same workgroup, (3) a new job with a new workgroup, or (4) any other work options that they would like to suggest, such as working in the firm's overseas offices. We wanted to understand which targets of commitment (e.g. their job, workgroup, or organisation) influenced their decision to return. This helped us to determine their intention to commit to the organisation in the future, and what influenced their decision.

For the analysis, our approach was abductive to develop a theoretical understanding through a recursive process of comparing existing theory and new empirical discoveries (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). In the early stage, the process of the data analysis was theoretically driven, in tandem with the literature of commitment. Later, it became more data-driven to allow the data to generate codes and themes. Therefore, the analysis involved several interrelated phases. It started with reading all the interview transcripts. This took place in an individual case narrative style, looking at the individual journey through all stages of the data collection. Each case was read

independently with more depth and then reviewed in comparison with others (Saldaña, 2003; Lewis, 2007). We subsequently conducted a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), to explore any key issues across cases, and look for patterns in the individuals' cases. We used Nvivo software for coding the interviews.

Firstly, our focus was on the occurrence of any commitment change. Secondly, we tried to understand the causes of it through the participants' explanation of this change and their socialisation experience with that particular target. This helped us to recognise the antecedents of commitment change. Thirdly, to identify the dynamics of commitment, we observed the recurrence of the commitment change to find out how often the bond of each target varied. This showed us that certain targets were shifting more than others, while these changes were influenced by different antecedents. Our themes were classified into three categories: types of dynamics commitment change, commitment change trends, and antecedents. All our themes are presented in figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Dynamics of Interns' Commitment



3.4 Findings:

Our analysis shows that the interns' multiple commitment bonds were changing over time. Some bonds were changing constantly depending on the targets' current impact on the interns' work (unstable commitment). For example, interns committed to their project team, but their bonds changed once the project was completed. Other commitment bonds were more steady and gradually changing due to their association with the interns' intention to commit to the organisation in the future (stable commitment). These bonds were related to the long-term impact of the organisation, such as future employment. We also found different antecedents that were influencing commitment changes. Next, we will present our findings following the structure of figure 3.1.

3.4.1 Unstable Commitment:

The interns' commitment to certain targets was changing on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis depending on work circumstances. Those targets were the ones who had a direct impact on the interns' daily work, such as their workgroup (e.g. manager and team). The interns' self-commitment was presented through their dedication to their learning, projects, and studies, which we refer to as 'self-targets' of commitment. It was important to address their self-targets because it was changing according to their current preferences, and that was influencing their commitment to other targets. For instance, they sometimes valued working with their team and dedicated themselves to that, then when a learning opportunity showed up, they felt that focusing on themselves was more rewarding (committing to their learning). The reason was that interns had a limited time in the organisation and they needed to use it carefully to get the most out of their internship. That is why each time they were trying to save their commitment for the most beneficial targets. As a result, they experienced highly dynamic commitment bonds, which were changing and influencing each other. Therefore, we found three main trends of commitment change: (a) workgroup and self-targets commitment change, (b) job impact on the workgroup commitment change, and (c) job impact on the self-targets commitment change. Next, we will discuss each change trend with its antecedents.

3.4.1.1 Commitment Change Related to the Workgroup and Self-targets

The interns' commitment to workgroups and self-targets were shifting according to the immediacy impact of each target. They were willing to offer their time and attention to the target with the

most impact on them, whether on their work, or learning and development. Thus, they committed to their workgroups when they were relying on them for task performance. Otherwise, they were committed to themselves, such as focusing on their own assignments and development opportunities.

Anything that would change the expected impact of a target would influence their decision to commit to that target. Therefore, we found different antecedents that were triggering those commitment changes. For example, interns' **positive/negative experiences with their workgroups** had an impact on their commitment. Positive experiences such as receiving support, or working closely with their co-workers, strengthened their relationship with the group. This gave them a friendly environment where they could participate and develop, which had a huge impact on their work experience. In contrast, the interns' negative experiences with their colleagues, such as having conflicts, harmed their relationship and damaged their commitment. This made them feel that focusing on themselves was more beneficial. For example, the lack of team support made Jennifer shift her commitment to herself. She felt committing to her learning was much more worthy.

Why should I be putting loads of my commitment to it [group tasks] if they [group] are not going to give me anything back?... Not at all committed [to the group]. (Interview-2)

Instead,

[I'm] committed to myself... it means my self-development... like the learning things. (Interview-3)

Working independently reduced interns' reliance on others, and that decreased the amount of attention and effort they were willing to offer their groups. Every time interns had independent responsibilities, they became less committed to their workgroups, and more to themselves. Ronald was committed to his supervisor, who was assigning him tasks, thus, he needed his support.

Maybe the subconscious part of me feels, the better I do and more hard work for him, he sort of would like me more as a person and give me more responsibilities. (Interview-3)

However, his commitment changed when he began working independently, as he shifted his commitment to his own project.

I've become a bit more independent, I don't need him [supervisor] as much I guess... [Committed to] the projects I work on. (Interview-4)

The stage of the internship also influenced the interns' commitment. The interns' priorities were changing, depending on the demands and the circumstances of each stage of their internship (e.g. early, middle, and late), which was reflected in their commitment. For instance, at the beginning of the internship, the interns' main concern was to make a good impression and develop their relationship with their team. Accordingly, they were highly committed to them and invested a lot in their relationship. At the middle stage and towards the end, they tended to commit more to themselves. They would focus on their performance to obtain a good review and participate in different learning events. That is why, from the middle to late interviews, it was clear that the interviews tended to be more about themselves.

My first priority right now is myself... because, to be quite frank, I would say, I think I've made my impression with my manager now, so I definitely wouldn't say she was my first priority anymore. (Ivana, Interview-3)

I can't say it's my manager or my team I'm committed to, so I think I'm committed to myself now, more because I want to do well when I leave and I want to finish my target and have a good result. I guess it's been like this throughout, but I think at the beginning and the middle it was more of establishing a relationship with everyone, and making a good impression with your manager, whereas right now, I am a bit more selfish because I want to take the most of it while I'm still here, so I want to find more time to do my learnings and meet more people and have a big network. (Alyssa, Interview-4)

Learning opportunities in the workplace opened up new ways of benefitting from their internship. This made them change their commitment towards their learning and development. The opportunities could be informal training that enabled them to develop their skills and knowledge. Sara was committed to her project team, until she got involved in an international engineering competition, which was a great chance to develop her skills and meet senior people. This made her shift her commitment to her development by focusing on the competition.

I think I'm committed to like the extra stuff as well as extracurricular stuff, not project stuff... I'm trying to just improve myself as an engineer... like the competition I am doing, like getting involved with... and just kind of like trying to do as much as I can, just to make the most of my time here. (Interview-3)

3.4.1.2 Job Impact on Workgroup Commitment

The job was influencing the interns' commitment to their workgroups. The interns' jobs were not static; their work was always changing, and that influenced the variations of their commitment. Most of them were depending on their groups to assign them tasks. Therefore, the interns perceived job duties and responsibilities as the group's reliance, support, and commitment to them. As a result, they felt responsible and dedicated themselves to their groups. For the interns, meaningful and challenging assignments indicated that they were trusted and considered as employees, whereas simple and repetitive tasks were interpreted as they were unable to do the work. The **meaningfulness of the job** had a big influence on the interns' bond with their workgroups. For example, Max felt that his team members were unsupportive and un-committed to him because they assigned him a worthless job that required very basic skills.

Not committed to anyone... No one is committed to me here. (Interview-2)

I'm very disappointed... 95% of my work is useless. (Interview-3)

Likewise, **job skill variety** provided interns with an opportunity to learn, which could also signify the care and support of their group. This enhanced their commitment to the workgroup and motivated them to put more effort into their work. They also believed that committing to their group would help them get interesting and challenging tasks.

Maybe it's subconsciously part of me that says, the better I do work for him [supervisor]. He's sort of would like me as a person and give me more responsibility. (Ronald, Interview-3)

However, this could change with any **changes in work circumstances**, such as completing a task, or switching from one project to another. The job was determining the interns' involvement and interaction with their groups, which then influenced their decision to commit. Any changes that occurred in their work changed the amount of time and attention that they were willing to offer their groups. For example, Alyssa's commitment to her team declined and shifted to her manager because she became more involved with the manager's work.

She [Manager] is the one that always asks me to do things... so it's an obvious commitment to her, an extreme one, to them [team] I'm committed but not as much. (Interview-3)

3.4.1.3 Job Impact on Commitment to Self-targets

The interns' commitment to self-targets refers to their self-commitment (e.g. my learning, my project). We found that the job had an impact on their commitment to different self-targets. **Skill variety** of a job had an impact on the interns' commitment to different self-targets. When interns' jobs were unchallenging and not developing their skills, they tended to focus on other self-targets that were more beneficial to them, such as trying other external assignments and activities. This could vary according to the different tasks/projects they were involved in. For instance, Mark was unsatisfied with his current projects because of the lack of skill variety, which eliminated the learning factor. Therefore, his commitment shifted towards himself through learning and building a professional network that could be useful in the future.

I'd say I'm committed to myself and getting as much knowledge as possible and connections with people. That's what I decided was the best thing I can now get. (Interview-3)

Moreover, the interns' commitment to self-targets could vary from time to time because of the **changes in work circumstances**, such as completing a project, or starting a new assignment. One time they may commit to a project because it was more interesting, then later they may shift their commitment to another assignment. This caused instability in their commitment. Martin explained the variation in the level of his work commitment, and how it could sometimes be hard to maintain it.

I want to be committed to my work, but it's not always the easiest thing because it is boring or it's not structured well, and that does vary from time to time... If it's a task that I'm enjoying I'll be quite committed to it...and then there will be other times where it will be something that really I'm not enjoying at all... Yeah, it depends what I'm doing as to how committed I am to what I am doing. (Interview-3)

Overall, from the interns' perspective, the unstable commitment bonds were associated with the targets' direct and current impact on their work. Since it is hard to maintain multiple commitment bonds, due to the limitation of individual's resources (e.g. attention, time), the interns tended to focus on the bonds that were currently more helpful to them. As a result, the change of their commitment was associated with the change of the work circumstances, and the stability of their work was reflected on the stability of their commitment bonds.

3.4.2 Stable Commitment:

The interns' organisational commitment was associated with their future commitment (long-term commitment), which meant their willingness to return and commit to the organisation in the future. In this case, interns were willing to invest more in their work and relationships with their workgroups. That is why their commitment was more stable, gradually developed over time, and was not affected by the daily work incidents. Instead, it needed a significant event, such as values conflict, to suddenly change. Since the interns' stable commitment bonds were associated with their organisational commitment, these bonds were influenced by their perception of their match with the organisation, job, and workgroup. This was reflected in their match with the work environment, which then influenced their decision to consider the organisation for future employment. Our analysis reveals three main themes of commitment change trends, which we are going to discuss next.

3.4.2.1 Job Impact on Organisational Commitment

One of the key factors that influenced the interns' organisational commitment was their job. Interns who believed that they fit with their job were able to see themselves doing it long-term. This was reflected in their willingness to re-join the organisation and accept a permanent job offer. The interns' perception of the match between their needs/desires and what was provided by their jobs (**Person-Job fit**) (Edwards, 1991), was the main influencer of their intention to commit to the organisation in the future. For example, Martin was a Mechanical Engineering intern, but he was working in the Building Services department. He felt that his job did not match his professional field, so he decided not to return as a graduate. The reason was not the organisation or the team - it was his job. Yet, it affected his organisational commitment.

I don't like the job I was doing, [it] is a good company to work for... my team is good.[but] I don't like building services. (Final Interview)

In contrast, Alyssa believed that she fit perfectly with her job.

I really like it [job] and it suits me perfectly... and my character, so I'm really enjoying my work. (Interview-2).

This made her committed to the organisation, as she was willing to accept a job offer. Her commitment was stable during the whole internship because it was related to her future commitment to the organisation.

3.4.2.2 Job and Workgroup Impact on Organisational Commitment

Job and workgroup had a major impact on interns' workplace experiences, which influenced their perception of the organisation. As mentioned earlier, the perceived **person-job fit** was influencing the interns' future commitment to the organisation. Similarly, their perception of **person-group fit**, which refers to the conceptualisation of the individuals' match with the workgroup (Werbel & Gilliland, 1999) affected their organisational commitment. Fitting with both the job and the workgroup indicated the interns' match with the work environment. Accordingly, they committed to the organisation and tended to return as graduates. For example, Jennifer believed that her job did not match her skills, plus she did not fit with her team. At the end, she was not committed to the organisation, or had the intention of applying for a graduate position.

*I would reject [job offer]... because it doesn't suit my skill set, I don't think I've potentiality to grow within that team and within that job, so I would reject that one.
(Final Interview)*

Furthermore, **changes in work circumstances** could cause a change in the interns' organisational commitment. However, it should be a significant change to affect their perception of and commitment to their job, workgroup, or organisation. For example, Rose was enjoying working in the 'FU' campaign, and was highly satisfied with her job and team, until the organisation decided to shut down the campaign and lay-off most of the team as part of a restructuring process. This was very disappointing for her, as eventually, she lost her ideal work and team. This damaged her perception of and commitment to the organisation.

I don't want to work in a company that's going to put their employees at risk... this is a real shame, this team is really nice, friendly, hardworking, talented team, and I think for that to go, it just madness... it shows maybe what the business is looking for and I don't know if that matches what I would be looking for in a job. (Interview-3)

It was very disappointing and demotivating... we were a nice, strong hard working team and that's all gone now... wouldn't say I am very committed to anything in the [company] ... I think just want to leave. (Interview-4)

3.4.2.3 Organisation and Job Impact on Commitment to Workgroup

From the beginning, some interns were already committed to the organisation because of its good market reputation or their earlier experiences in the workplace (e.g. summer internship). Then, when they felt that their jobs matched their skills and interests, they viewed the organisation as a desirable place to work. This encouraged them to invest more in the workplace. They aimed to give a good impression and develop relationships with their teams that could last longer. They believed that these relationships would support

them later as graduate applicants. Therefore, interns who experienced an **early (pre)-organisational commitment** and perceived a high **person-job fit** were more willing to commit to the workgroup. Here, the interns' commitment to the workgroup was based on their long-term impact on them as potential job candidates. Thus, it was a more stable bond that developed with time and could continue after the internship. This was in contrast to the unstable commitment bonds to workgroups, which were based on their current and direct impact, focusing on what interns could get from them instantly.

For example, Sara and James were both highly committed to their organisations and jobs; thus, they wanted to be involved in the workplace. They tried to socialise and develop relationships with their teams to build connections that could assist them later in getting a job offer. Clearly, their commitment to the workgroup was influenced by their commitment to their organisations and jobs.

...got to know people in my team a lot more... Because I am conscious that I am moving [leaving], so... I need to leave a good impression... Because they are the ones who are going to decide basically if I get the job. (Sara, Interview-4)

[committed to] meeting people, and kind of developing good relationships... I think when I'm looking for a career after university, because I know a lot of people and if I wanted to come back... it would be a lot easier to get a job, because they'd know who I am. (James, Interview-4)

In conclusion, interns had multiple commitment bonds with two types of dynamics of commitment. Unstable commitment, which related to the current and direct targets' impact on interns, and stable commitment, which was associated with their intention to commit to the organisation in the future.

3.5 Discussion:

Our intention in this paper was to explore the dynamic nature of interns' workplace commitment. Our analysis reveals that interns were experiencing two types of commitment dynamics. Firstly, an unstable commitment that was changing on a daily, or weekly basis depending on the targets' impact on the individuals' current work. Secondly, a stable commitment, which was more steady and gradually developing, due to its association with the interns' intention to commit to the organisation.

Commitment has been viewed mostly as a stable bond that evolves with time (Beck & Wilson, 2000; Lee et al., 1992; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Porter et al., 1974). This is due to different reasons.

Firstly, the conceptualisation of commitment has somehow supported this view. For instance, identifying commitment as an attachment (Mowday et al., 1979), a result of investment reward (Becker, 1960), or an exchange (Wiener, 1982), perhaps indicates that time is required for commitment to develop. Similarly, (Meyer & Allen's 1991) three-component model of commitment which has been the predominant model in the literature, defines commitment as affective (emotional attachment), normative (sense of obligation), and continuance (cost of leaving) bonds, which are all expected to take time to evolve. However, Klein et al.'s (2012) definition of commitment as a conscious decision people make to dedicate themselves to serving the purpose of a target emphasises its dynamic nature, as it shows that commitment can change anytime according to the individuals' choices. This view is supported by our findings, which reveal that the unstable commitment bonds were frequently changing on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis depending on the interns' decisions. Interns were assessing the targets' impact on them depending on their current priorities (e.g. current project team), and asking themselves 'who is worthy of my commitment now?' Accordingly, interns decided on the amount of dedication, attention, and time they were willing to offer each target. As a result, they experienced volatile multiple commitments, which could easily shift and end (unstable commitment).

Secondly, the majority of commitment research has been focusing on the organisational commitment (Becker, 1960; Ehrhardt, Miller, Freeman, & Hom, 2011; Jaros, 1997; Joo, 2010; Meyer & Allen, 1984; Meyer & Maltin, 2010; Mowday et al., 1979). Even the recent studies about the dynamics of commitment were also organisationally focused (Bergman et al., 2013, Solinger et al., 2015). Besides, commitment has been heavily studied in a traditional employment arrangement (e.g. full-time employees) (Becker, 1960; Heffner & Rentsch, 2001; Meyer & Allen, 1984; Mowday et al., 1979; Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001; Whitener & Walz, 1993). In this context, commitment is expected to be a long-term bond with the organisation, where the exchange relationship between individuals and the organisation takes more time, making it a relatively stable bond (Roe, Solinger, & Van Olffen, 2008). Researchers have found that organisational commitment develops gradually, starting from the early stage of employment, and it might strengthen over time, or decline due to unmet expectations (Solinger, Van Olffen, Roe, & Hofmans, 2013), and significant events such as mergers and layoffs (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Vandenberg & Stanley, 2009).

Our findings support this body of research and we found that interns' organisational commitment was more stable because the organisation had no direct effect on them on a daily basis (Lewin, 1943). The expected impact of the organisation was the future employment opportunity and whether they decided to return for a graduate job or not. Therefore, the interns' organisational commitment was associated with their intention to commit in the future (future commitment). In this case, the interns' commitment required consistent events or a significant incident of change (Bergman et al., 2013). Interns can be classified as 'boomerang employees' who have left the organisation but are rehired for a second employment period (Shipp et al., 2014). Employees with a gradually increasing personal dissatisfaction of the job or the company are more likely to leave the organisation with no desire to return. Likewise, employees who face negative work-related shocks, such as unexpected demotion or ethical conflicts, make them assess whether their image of the company has been violated and decide not to return (Shipp et al., 2014).

However, in this research, we are investigating the dynamics of multiple commitments in the internship context. That is why our findings also address the high pace of commitment change (unstable commitment). In the case of multiple commitments, it was hard for individuals to maintain their commitment to all targets. Thus, they were trying to change their commitment to free resources and redirect them to support other commitments. In the internship context, individuals had limited time to explore the workplace and develop professionally, which raised the pace of their work experiences. All of that increased the dynamic change of their multiple commitments.

Furthermore, the interns' commitment was influenced by the expected targets' impact on their work, whether it was a current impact (e.g. on-the-job training), or a long-term (future) impact (e.g. graduate employment). This was influencing the duration and the stability of their commitment bonds. For example, due to the current work involvement, interns' commitments to their project partners were changing according to daily incidents, such as project completion. However, when their commitments to a group were influenced by their intention to commit to the organisation, they experienced more stable commitment, as they were aiming for a long-term relationship. That is why unstable commitment bonds were mainly influenced by their daily work experiences. However, the stable commitment bonds were affected by their perceptions of their fit with the organisation, jobs, and groups, which influenced their willingness to consider the

organisation for future employment. This has implications for our understanding of the reasons for the dynamics of commitment.

Finally, we agree with the notion that commitment is a relatively stable bond (e.g. organisational commitment) (Beck & Wilson, 2000; Lee et al., 1992; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Porter et al., 1974), whilst also acknowledging that it is a dynamic bond that is consistently changing (Becker et al., 2013; Bergman et al., 2013; Klein et al., 2012; Solinger et al., 2015). Yet, we argue that individuals can simultaneously experience different commitment bonds with different types of dynamics (unstable, stable). The pace of commitment change could vary depending on the desired and expected targets' impact on individuals (current, long-term). The duration of commitment can differ by a target, while the strength of the bond can change during that time. Our contribution is to identify the different types of dynamics of commitment and to understand the reasons behind them.

3.6 Limitations:

This research has some limitations that could be improved in the future. Firstly, participants were addressing their commitment to their group as a whole, and they specified their managers, supervisors, and project teams. Studying the commitment to each target individually beyond their categories (e.g. workgroup) could provide more understanding of the types of dynamics of commitment. For example, individuals could experience a stable commitment to their group as a whole, yet experience unstable bonds to certain members of their group. Secondly, examining individuals' commitment five times during the internship helped us follow the changes of their multiple commitments. The longitudinal aspects can be developed by capturing the commitment change on more occasions (e.g. weekly or monthly), to examine the bonds, fluctuations and their antecedents. Quantitative measurement could be used to assess the magnitude of commitment changes, for example, daily or weekly diary studies could be considered in future research. Furthermore, future research could investigate a larger number of participants in different contemporary work contexts. Likewise, examining other work employment, such as graduates or gig workers, could address new insights into the dynamics of commitment. The stability and term of employment could impact the stability of the individuals' multiple commitments.

3.7 Conclusion and Implications:

This research is one of the first to examine the dynamics of multiple commitments in an internship context. Based on our empirical data, we assert that commitment is a dynamic bond, which can change gradually or abruptly. Since it is hard to maintain all commitment bonds concurrently, individuals tended to change some of their commitment bonds to support other commitments. The thematic analysis of the data pinpointed two types of dynamics of commitment: ‘unstable commitment’ that was changing constantly and related to current targets’ impact; and ‘stable commitment’ that was more steady and associated with their intention to commit to the organisation in the future. Different antecedents were causing commitment change. This offers a deeper understanding of the dynamics of interns’ commitment and their intention to commit, which does not exist in previous studies. This study has several theoretical and practical contributions.

Firstly, it supports Klein et al.’s (2012) view of commitment as a conscious choice that people make to manage their multiple commitments. As a result, commitment can suddenly end without gradually decreasing, since it refers to the people’s decision to maintain or end their bond. Secondly, we contribute to the ongoing debate on the dynamic nature of commitment by addressing the different types of dynamics of commitment. We argue that people can experience multiple commitments with different types of dynamics. This challenges the predominant understanding of commitment, which says that people commit unintentionally and their bonds need time to evolve (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Vandenberg & Stanley, 2009).

In addition, job design can influence the dynamics of individuals’ workplace commitment. Job design refers to how “jobs, tasks, and roles are structured, enacted and modified and what the impact of these structures, enactments, and modifications are on the individual, group, and organisational outcomes” (Grant & Parker, 2009, p.319). It is usually viewed as a top-down process where employers create jobs and select the right people for the jobs. However, employees could still change the conditions and boundaries of job tasks and responsibilities, which is known as ‘job crafting’ (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Jobs structure the nature of employees’ relationships with co-workers by forming the pattern of interactions and collaborations (Stewart & Barrick, 2000; Wageman, 1995). They also determine the quality and quantity of individuals’ interactions with clients (Gutek, Bhappu, Liao-Troth, & Cherry, 1999). According to our findings, work interactions can increase targets’ impact on individuals, which then influences the

development of their commitment. As a result, we found that the highest reason for commitment change is 'change in work circumstances' because it can reshape the individuals' interactions with others, which leads to commitment change. This means work instability could lead to commitment bonds instability. For example, interns who did not have fixed job responsibilities, and got involved in different tasks and projects, they experienced unstable commitment bonds. Hence, individuals' commitment bonds change constantly according to their work conditions.

This has valuable implications for employers, as it helps them understand how to influence their employees' commitment through stabilising or changing their working conditions. For example, designing jobs with relational and task boundaries that enhance preferable commitment bonds. Furthermore, individuals could experience multiple commitments with incompatible demands or over commit to certain targets, which could create biased judgment and decision-making (Becker, Klein, & Meyer, 2009; Kinnie & Swart, 2012). In this case, commitment change would be beneficial, as employees need to free their resources (e.g. time, effort, attention) and redirect them to support favored commitment targets. Therefore, understanding commitment change and the reasons behind it could assist the managers to support the desired commitment shift towards the desired target, in the desired timing, to achieve the desired outcomes. For the internship context, this enables employers to understand how to influence interns' multiple commitments, which can enhance their future commitment to the organisation. For instance, in order to develop individuals' intention to commit to the organisation, managers need to improve their fit perceptions with the organisational environment.

Finally, we expect that the dynamics of commitment will become more relevant as the context of work is changing and progressively taking place outside the traditional organisational form (Cappelli & Keller, 2013). There is a rise of the cross-boundary work where the organisational boundaries become more permeable, such as having integrated project teams from multiple organisations, or more fluid, such as gig employment and virtual networks (Kinnie & Swart, 2019). Therefore, as this could contribute to the dynamics of multiple commitments, the old perspective of commitment as a stable bond needs to be revisited. With the contemporary work context, it is important to continue the study of the dynamics of multiple commitments and its implications.

In summary, the paper explains how interns' commitment bonds interact and change due to the occurrence of different antecedents. Importantly, our data analysis enables us to identify the

different types of dynamics of interns' commitment. This offers a deeper understanding of the concept of commitment across the workplace targets and answers the calls for research in the development and change of multiple commitments (Klein, 2016).

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The Impact of Organisational Socialisation on Interns' Intention to Commit

Abstract

This paper investigates the impact of OS on interns' intention to commit to the organisation in the future. We focus on three OS dimensions (organisation, group, job) that represent the main features of the socialisation process. A longitudinal study of a hundred and three interviews was conducted with twenty interns in three professional service firms. We found that the socialisation process influenced the interns' intention to commit through their perceptions of fit with their jobs, organisations, and groups. We argue that the person-job fit had the main impact on their organisational commitment. The match between interns' skills and desires with job requirements was strongly influencing their willingness to accept a permanent job offer. These findings show, that in order to attract and retain interns, employers need to offer meaningful and challenging jobs, as well as effective job socialisation.

Keywords: Organisational Socialisation, Socialisation Dimensions, Workplace Commitment, Targets of Commitment, Perception of Fit, Intention to Commit, Future Commitment, Internship

4.1 Introduction:

Organisational socialisation (OS) enables newcomers to acquire knowledge about their jobs, workgroups, and organisations (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). It facilitates their adjustment in the workplace, and speeds up their contribution to the work (Brass, 1985). Effective OS processes are positively associated with employees' job performance, fit perceptions, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and intention to remain within the organisation (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007; Saks, Uggersle, & Fassina, 2007). The socialisation literature has identified three OS dimensions (organisation, group, job) that include the important features of the socialisation process in the workplace (Fisher, 1986). Haueter, Macan, and Winter (2003) outline the distinct impacts of each dimension on the employees' behaviour, stating its association with job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The past socialisation studies have predominantly focused on organisation-initiated approaches, measuring the impact of the OS tactics (process) in general on individuals' behaviour (Bauer et al., 2007; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), without addressing the different effect of each dimension. This paper aims to rectify this shortcoming by investigating the impact of each dimension of socialisation (organisation socialisation, group socialisation, job socialisation) on the commitment. This can help us articulate the contribution of the socialisation dimensions to the development of the individuals' commitment.

The socialisation process can facilitate the match between newcomers' properties (e.g. goals, values, and personality) and organisation properties (e.g. values, culture, job requirements), which can influence the strength of their commitment (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Organisational commitment has been considered as a manifestation of (un)successful socialisation (Bauer et al., 2007; Lance, Vandenberg, & Self, 2000) because it represents a concurrently developing bond between a person and the organisation (Klein, Molloy, & Brinsfield, 2012). However, workplace commitment has been heavily studied in full-time employees, while less attention has been given to interns. Therefore, we explore the influence of OS on the individuals' commitment during the internship programme.

Internship participation has grown rapidly over the past three decades and become the ideal path to full-time employment for many interns and employers (CI, 2018). In 2019, more than seventy percent of the UK's best employers offered internships (High Fliers Research, 2019). During the

internship, individuals learn about the working conditions and organisational culture, helping them to assess person-organisation fit, which influences their willingness to accept a job offer (Beenen & Pichler, 2014). Thus, it is important for employers to provide an effective socialisation process that helps interns acquire knowledge about their job, workgroup, and organisation. Yet, in OS literature little has been said about the socialisation during the internship.

This research contributes to the socialisation literature by answering the question: ‘How does OS impact the interns’ intention to commit to the organisation?’ focusing on three OS dimensions (organisation, group, job). A qualitative longitudinal study was conducted to obtain a richer understanding of how the socialisation of each dimension could influence commitment. The research data was gathered using semi-structured interviews that took place on five occasions. A total of a hundred and three interviews were conducted with twenty interns, in three professional service firms in the UK. We found that the socialisation process was influencing the individuals’ organisational commitment through their fit perceptions with their jobs, organisations, and groups. Yet, their fit perception with their jobs was the main influencer to their intention to commit to the organisation. This contradicts the predominant assumption that the organisation is the main influence for individuals’ organisational commitment.

Next, we discuss the previous research. Then, we will present the research methodology. Finally, we will discuss the findings, followed by the research implications and limitations.

4.2 Previous Research:

The main role of OS is to facilitate newcomers’ learning about the workplace (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). This can lead to various outcomes, such as developing their fit perception with the organisational environment, as well as influencing their commitment (Bauer et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007). Therefore, this section will discuss the previous research of OS, perception of fit, and commitment.

4.2.1 Organisational Socialisation (OS):

Organisational socialisation is a process of adjusting and engaging newcomers to their work and the organisational culture (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Taormina (1997) defines it as ‘a process by which a person secures relevant job skills, acquires a functional level of organisational understanding, attains supportive social interactions with co-workers, and generally accepts the

established ways of a particular organisation' (p. 29). OS plays a critical role in newcomers' adjustment in order to actively participate and become organisational members (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). To date, the organisational socialisation literature reviews and meta-analytic studies agree that OS positively affects both employees and organisations (Klein & Heuser, 2008). Scholars have studied and measured OS through different angles: tactics refers to the socialisation process (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979); domains (content) refers to the acquired information during socialisation (Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994); dimensions refers to the main aspects in the workplace that newcomers need to socialise with and acquire knowledge about (e.g. job, group) (Fisher, 1986; Haueter et al., 2003).

First, for the OS process and how newcomers acquire information, Van Maanen and Schein (1979) introduced a set of tactics employers might use to facilitate the socialisation process. These six tactics examine whether the newcomers socialise (a) formally or informally, (b) individually or in groups, (c) through sequential or random experiences, (d) using a specific role model or not, (e) within variable or fixed timetable, while (f) affirming newcomers' attributes and identities or forcing them to adapt a certain standard of behaviours. Jones (1986) classified the tactics into institutionalised (collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, investiture), and individualised (individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, divestiture). Institutionalised socialisation offers newcomers a common set of learning experiences through a structured and formalised process. It speeds up newcomers' adjustment and reduces uncertainty. It encourages individuals to accept pre-set roles, confirming the organisational status quo. In contrast, individualised socialisation is an unstructured tactic, which can increase uncertainty and anxiety in the early stage of employment. It encourages individuals to question the status quo and develop their own approaches to their roles (Ashforth, Saks, & Lee, 1997; Jones, 1986).

Second, other scholars have examined the socialisation content focusing on what is learned. Chao et al. (1994) identify socialisation content as six domains: organisational goals/values, history, language, politics, people, and performance proficiency. Similarly, Taormina, (1997) defines the main aspects of socialisation in four domains: training, understanding/perception, co-worker support, and future prospects. All these domains interlink and overlap, but they all refer to the socialisation content as learning about the organisation, how to work in a particular group, and how to perform one's job successfully.

Third, the socialisation literature has identified the main OS dimensions (organisation, group, job), that can influence the socialisation process (Fisher, 1986). Employees need to learn about their job and workgroup as much as they need to learn about their organisation. OS dimensions represent the main aspects of work environment that newcomers need to socialise with. Organisation socialisation refers to learning the values, goals, history, politics, and leadership style of the organisation (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Group socialisation refers to learning groups' associated behaviours as well as goals, values, and rules (Chao et al., 1994). Job socialisation means acquiring job knowledge and skills, and learning how to perform the tasks successfully (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Learning about each OS dimension can affect socialisation outcomes (e.g. job satisfaction, organisational commitment) differently (Haueter et al., 2003). In this paper, we focus on the socialisation of each dimension. To distinguish between their different impacts on socialisation outcomes (commitment), which is absent from the existing socialisation literature.

In addition, OS is associated with different personal and organisational outcomes, such as role clarity, job satisfaction, performance and turnover (Bauer et al., 2007). It also can establish and strengthen the fit between individuals and their organisation, job, and group. For instance, institutionalised socialisation was positively related to fit perceptions, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, and negatively related to role conflict, role ambiguity and intention to quit (Bauer et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007). Individualised socialisation was associated with higher job innovation (Jones, 1986). Furthermore, fit perception has been considered as a socialisation process outcome (Saks et al., 2007). A strong fit perception can lead to high job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Kahn, 1990). Likewise, socialisation scholars found that newcomers' fit perception was mediating the relation between the socialisation process and job satisfaction and turnover intention (Haueter et al., 2003; Saks et al., 2007).

4.2.2 Perception of Fit:

The purpose of OS is to facilitate learning about the organisational environment including the organisation's values, people, history and politics (Chao et al., 1994), which contributes to the person fit with the organisational environment (Kristof, 1996). Person-environment (P-E) fit is known as the compatibility between a person and an organisational environment which happens when their characteristics are matched (Schneider, 2001). To understand the meaning of P-E fit,

two conceptualisations of P-E fit were proposed: supplementary and complementary fit. Supplementary fit occurs when a person “supplements, embellishes, or possesses characteristics which are similar to other individuals” in an environment (Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987, p. 269). This means that, similarities with the work environment lead to a person’s fit perception. Complementary fit occurs when a person’s characteristics add to what is missing in the environment, or vice versa (Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987). Here, the match with the environment’s supply and demand leads to a person’s fit perception. Complementary fit exists when the individual’s skills meet environmental requirements (demands-abilities fit), or when the individual’s needs are met by environmental resources (needs-supplies fit) (Kristof, 1996).

Furthermore, for measuring a person’s fit, scholars have distinguished between subjective and objective fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Subjective (or perceived) fit refers to the person’s perception of their match with the environment. It is a direct assessment of the compatibility between P and E that is made by the individuals themselves. Objective fit refers to the existing match between the individuals and the environment beyond their perception of it. It is an indirect assessment of the match between P and E variables, according to different sources. Most research has focused on subjective fit (Kristof, 1996) because people’s subjective perception is more likely to influence their behaviour.

P-E fit is a multidimensional concept including different subtypes of fit (Law, Wong, & Mobley, 1998), such as the individuals’ compatibility with their organisations, groups, and jobs. Person-Organisation (P-O) fit is described as ‘the compatibility between people and organisations that occurs when (a) at least one entity provides what the other needs, or (b) they share similar fundamental characteristics, or (c) both’ (Kristof, 1996, P.4). Person- Group (P-G) fit is defined as the match between the new employee and the workgroup (Werbel & Johnson, 2001). Then, Person-Job (P-J) fit refers to the match between the person’s abilities and the job demands, or the person’s needs/desires and what is provided by the job (Edwards, 1991).

Previous research has addressed the outcomes of each type of fit. For instance, organisational commitment is highly influenced by P-O fit, satisfaction with co-workers by P-G fit, and job satisfaction by P-J fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Employees’ performance was found to be influenced by their P-J and P-G fit rather than P-O fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Although, P-G fit was found to have a weak influence on individuals’ job satisfaction, organisational

commitment, and intention to quit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). In general, job-related outcomes are more associated with P-J fit, while organisation related outcomes are associated with P-O fit (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001). For example, job satisfaction is strongly influenced by P-J fit because P-O fit is less related to daily tasks, thus, is less likely to influence the individuals' job satisfaction (Kristof, 1996). Instead, P-O fit is more related to organisational commitment, intention to quit, and turnover (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

Additionally, P-O fit has been associated with organisational attraction (Judge & Cable, 1997). People will be attracted to organisations that have similar attributes to them (Schneider, 1987). Cable and Judge (1996) found that applicants' perception of P-O fit was influenced by the similarities of their values with the organisation's values. They also claim that P-O fit has a greater impact on job offer acceptance. That is why employer branding has focused on P-O fit, describing what it is like to work in the organisation (Lievens, Van Hove, & Anseel, 2007). Ambler and Barrow (1996) define the employer brand as "the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company" (p.187). Employers aim to create a positive image of the organisation to attract new employees. Moreover, P-O fit is considered to be a major element to select individuals for long-term employment (Bowen, Ledford Jr, & Nathan, 1991). Hiring people who are compatible with the organisational culture makes a flexible workforce where employees can easily move between jobs. Individuals who are confident with their fit with the organisational environment are more likely to experience a high organisational commitment (Kahn, 1990).

4.2.3 Commitment:

Commitment as a concept has been continually debated. It has been defined as an attachment (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979), a work investment outcome (Becker, 1960), a result of a reciprocal bond (Wiener, 1982). Yet, the dominant concept in the commitment literature has been the three components model of affective (I want to), normative (I need to), and continuance (I have to), commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Recently, (Klein et al., 2012) redefine the workplace commitment as "a volitional psychological bond reflecting dedication to and responsibility for a particular target" (p.137). This means a person's commitment to a target is a conscious choice to dedicate in serving the purpose of that target. Commitment is one of the important work bonds that can affect employees' job satisfaction (Bateman & Stasser,

1984), performance (Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994), knowledge sharing (Swart, Kinnie, Rossenberg, & Yalabik, 2014), and intention to quit (Joo, 2010; Marique & Stinglhamber, 2011).

Furthermore, individuals can bond with different work entities, whether inside the organisation, such as managers, and co-workers (Vandenberghe, Bentein, & Stinglhamber, 2004), or outside the organisation, such as clients, and suppliers (McElroy, Morrow, & Laczniak, 2001). The existence of multiple commitments has a significant impact on individuals' attitudes and behaviour (Becker, Randall, & Riegel, 1995). Committing to multiple targets can create a conflict of interest that makes it difficult for individuals to identify with their employers (Donnelly, 2011; McLean Parks, Kidder, & Gallagher, 1998). For example, employees may commit to their profession or clients more than their organisation (Kinnie & Swart, 2012). This conflict between targets of commitment can reduce employees' organisational commitment (Reichers, 1986). However, committing to a target may not be at the expense of another. Instead, it may be overlapping and synergetic (Donnelly, 2011; Johnson, Groff, & Taing, 2009), especially, if there is a high degree of congruence of the targets' norms, value, and expectations (McLean Parks et al., 1998). Thus, employees' commitment to their organisation and their profession can be positively associated (Wallace, 1995).

The psychological distance of the targets is an important factor that can influence the individuals' commitment to those targets. Mueller and Lawler (1999) define the concept of 'cognitive distance' as the "degree of cognitive immediacy and salience that the employee associates with an organisational unit or target" (p.327). Individuals who experience a higher number of meaningful interactions with a target are more likely to view the target as more proximally positioned in their field (Becker, 2009). For example, the CEO is often more distant than supervisors and has less interaction with lower-level employees. Lawler, (1992) states that employees experience independent commitments to distal targets (organisation) and to proximal targets (workgroup) because they give more credit to their proximal targets for their positive emotions and work experiences. This means proximal targets have an 'interaction advantage' that develops strong ties with the workers (Mueller & Lawler, 1999). Hence, they are expected to act in the interests of their proximal targets more than the distal ones. That is why individuals may identify themselves more with their proximal targets than with the larger organisation (Reade, 2001). Yet,

commitment to proximal targets contributes to the development of organisational commitment (Hunt & Morgan, 1994).

Furthermore, organisational commitment has been commonly identified as an outcome of OS (Bauer et al., 2007; Buchanan, 1974; Morrison, 2002; Van Maanen, 1975), because it represents a concurrently growing bond between new employees and the organisation (Klein et al., 2012; Mowday et al., 1982; Solinger et al., 2008). Organisational commitment is considered as a response to the socialisation experiences (Lance et al., 2000). Newcomers join the organisation with certain expectations of the workplace (Lance et al., 2000). They start their employment relationship with enthusiasm, goodwill and commitment, which can be considered as a ‘honeymoon period’ (Solinger, van Olffen, Roe, & Hofmans, 2013). However, the honeymoon period does not last forever; it might last for three to six months (Jokisaari & Nurmi, 2009). Solinger et al., (2013) argue that newcomers’ commitment begins to decline after joining the workplace, and they call this stage a ‘Honeymoon Hangover’. Newcomers’ feelings of disappointment as a result of unmet expectations, broken promises (Boswell, Boudreau, & Tichy, 2005), unpleasant work experiences (Lee, Ashford, Walsh, & Mowday, 1992), and failing to achieve personal goals (Maier & Brunstein, 2001), cause the strength of the individual-organisation bond to slope downward with time.

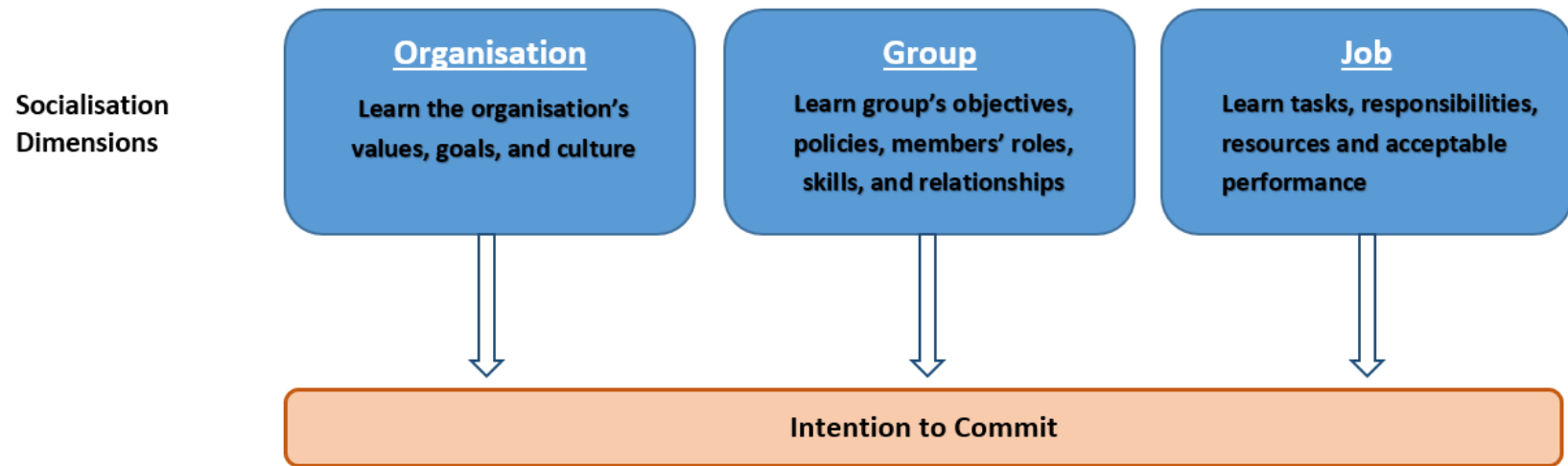
Moreover, the individuals’ commitment may develop before entering the organisation (pre-entry commitment), where it is influenced by a person’s values, beliefs, work expectations, and prior experiences (Mowday et al., 1982). Then after entering the organisation, commitment is affected by the individuals’ experiences of the workplace (post-entry commitment) (Cohen, 2007). Furthermore, people who experienced an organisational commitment during their employment may remain committed after leaving the organisation (Breitsohl & Ruhle, 2013). However, this depends on the nature of their leave, whether it is voluntarily or not. Non-voluntarily leave, such as being fired or forced to retire, may create a negative perception of the employers and harm the individuals’ organisational commitment (Elliot & Devine, 1994). In contrast, by leaving voluntarily, for example, to pursue further studies, individuals have a freedom of choice to leave. Thus, they possibly maintain their positive perception of the organisation and remain committed (Breitsohl & Ruhle, 2013). For instance, (Shipp et al., 2014) found that short-term workers who had a positive experience during their first employment were interested in returning to the

organisation in the future. They argue that, when people's decision to leave is not associated with dissatisfaction with the work or the company, they would be more open to returning for a second employment term in the future.

In this paper, we aim to explore individuals' future commitment to the organisation after the internship, which indicates their willingness to return and commit to the organisation. To achieve this, we refer to individuals' 'intention' as a predictor of their behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Triandis, 1979). 'Intention' has been used in the organisational behaviour research to predict people's behaviour, such as intention to quit, or performance intention (Joo, 2010; Shore, Newton, & Thornton, 1990). Therefore, we predict the interns' future commitment by examining their intention to commit to the organisation. This reflects the individuals' own estimated probability that they are willing to accept a permanent job offer and commit to the organisation in the future.

During the internship, interns assess their fit with the organisational environment which influences the possibility of accepting a permanent job offer with the organisation (Harris & Pattie, 2017). Socialisation processes can assist them in determining their fit with the organisation, job, and group. Thus, OS can be utilised to attract interns and convert them into full-time employees. Recognising the importance of OS during the internship, it is surprising that little attention has been paid to interns' socialisation. Therefore, in this study, we examined the impact of OS on interns' intention to commit to the organisation. Specifically, we focus on the organisation, group, and job socialisation, which are expected to be the most important OS dimensions for interns, to understand how the learning of each dimension would influence individuals' future organisational commitment. Figure 4.1 shows the theoretical framework.

Figure 4.1: Theoretical Framework



4.3 Methodology:

Our context for this research is internships. The internship is short-term employment that helps organisations to attract and select job candidates (Beenen & Pichler, 2014). Firms evaluate interns' organisational and job fit before offering permanent positions to them (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Likewise, interns learn about the work environment, which allows them to assess their fit with the organisation (Carless, 2005). An internship can be considered as a trial stage where individuals work in the organisation for months and then get to decide whether they want to return to the organisation or not (Beenen & Pichler, 2014). Therefore, the internship was the ideal work context to study individuals' future commitment through their intention to commit to the organisation in the future.

The research took place in three professional service firms (PSFs) in the UK; one financial services firm, and two engineering consultancies. PSFs are identified by their knowledge-based products and services (Alvesson, 2004). Professional workers deal with complex and uncertain work, which requires professional skills, and a high degree of autonomy. The nature of their work requires extensive interaction with different parties such as business partners, managers, team, and clients. The cross-boundary working environment can influence the employees to commit to different parties besides their organisation (Donnelly, 2009; Kinnie & Swart, 2012). PSFs are one of the highest graduate employers in the UK that rely on internship programmes as a source to attract and employ potential talents (High Fliers Research, 2019). The graduate recruiters in the participating firms helped us to contact the participants. The aim was to investigate the influence of OS practices on the interns' intention to commit to the organisation in the future. To achieve this, a cohort of interns was selected, in order to follow their socialisation process during the whole internship, while examining their intention to commit at the end. We worked with twenty interns, nine were from the financial services firm, and eleven were from the engineering consultancy firms (See Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Overview of the Participants

Field	Participants	Department	Type of internship	Internship length
Financial	Alyssa	Customers Relationship	Compulsory	6 Months
Services	Emma	Retail & Governance	Compulsory	6 Months
Consultancy	Ivana	Retail Marketing	Compulsory	6 Months
Firm	Andrea	Financial Services	Compulsory	6 Months
	Jennifer	Retail & Governance	Compulsory	6 Months
	Walter	Customers Relationship	Compulsory	6 Months
	Erica	Finance & Accounting	Optional	1 year
	Rose	Retail Marketing	Optional	1 year
	Claire	Finance & Accounting	Optional	1 year
Engineering	Martin	Building Services	Optional	1 year
Consultancy	Sara	Structures Team	Optional	1 year
Firm	Mark	Structures Team	Optional	1 year
	Ronald	Structures Team	Optional	1 year
	James	Structures Team	Optional	1 year
	Max	Signalling Team	Optional	1 year
	Chloe	Building Services	Optional	1 year
	Omar	Structures Team	Optional	1 year
	Justin	Building Services	Optional	1 year
	Ian	Structures Team	Optional	1 year
	Rema	Architectural Practice	Optional	1 year

The participants were undergraduate students who engaged in paid internships, whether to fulfill a degree requirement, or to gain work experience. In the engineering companies, teams were responsible for design, planning and overseeing the construction of new buildings and bridges, or alterations and extensions to existing properties or other structures. The interns were involved in various projects with different sub-teams. They were assigned tasks according to their skills, such as reviewing construction design, or structure calculations, using various software. Occasionally, they worked directly with clients and constructors. Sometimes, they needed to visit the sites to

check the progress of the construction. Most of their tasks were dynamically changing according to the project's demands. In the financial services firm, interns had specific roles with a set of responsibilities. They had different jobs in different departments. For example, two of them were working with clients' retention schemes, where they worked with client companies answering their claims and renewing their contracts. Others were investigating the effect of the intermediate companies' performance on the business process. Interns in the marketing group were working on digital campaigns, such as launching the organisation's products through social media. They were involved with their department members, and reported directly to their line managers. Sometimes, they had extra assignments with their group. Thus, their work was more stable and predictable.

We wanted to understand how the socialisation process was facilitating their learning around the workplace, and how that could influence their organisational commitment at the end. Therefore, a qualitative longitudinal study was conducted, examining the same cohort on different occasions (Adams, Khan, Raeside, & White, 2007; Menard, 2002). The data was collected on five occasions, during semi-structured interviews, lasting between 60 and 90 minutes. The first and final interviews were conducted on the first and last week of the internship. For the six months' internship, the interviews were conducted every seventy-five days (a month and a half), while for the twelve months' internship, the interviews took place approximately every three months. The total number of interviews was a hundred and three. Each time, participants were asked about their experiences of socialisation practices, the progress of their learning and understanding about the OS dimensions (organisation, group, job), and their perceptions of each dimension.

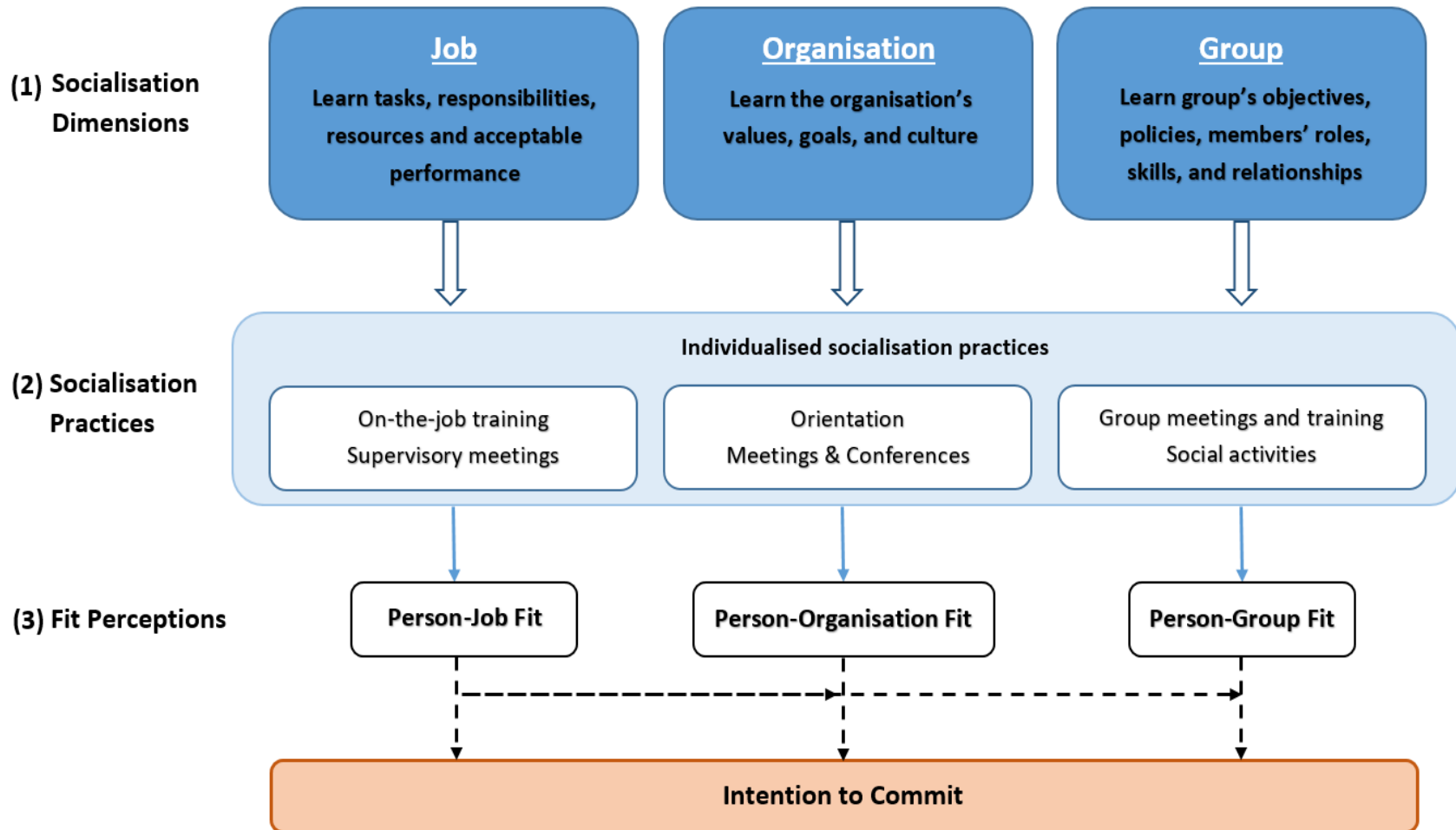
In the final interview, we used the scenario-based method to predict the interns' desire to accept a graduate job offer in their organisation. Scenarios are "coherent pictures of possible future." They are useful to create alternative futures away from the present, and predict accordingly the possible decisions and actions (Mietzner & Reger, 2005, p.223). We assume that the employers gave them four different permanent job offers. The job offers were as follows: (1) same job and workgroup, (2) a new job with the same workgroup, (3) a new job with a new workgroup, and (4) other suggested conditions such as working in the firm's overseas offices. The purpose was to determine their intention to commit to the organisation in the future, and what OS dimension influenced their decision (organisation, group, job).

We applied an abductive approach for the analysis to develop a theoretical understanding, by continually comparing the theory and new empirical findings (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). In the beginning, the data analysis process was theoretically driven referring to the socialisation and commitment literature. Then, it became more data-driven, allowing the data to generate codes and themes. The analysis process included several interrelated phases. It began with reading the interviews in an individual case narrative style, viewing the individual journey through all the interviews. The cases were reviewed in depth independently, then, were compared with each other (Lewis, 2007; Saldaña, 2003). The thematic analysis allowed us to explore any main issues across cases, and identify the patterns between the cases (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We used Nvivo software for the coding process.

In the analysis, we focused on the socialisation of each OS dimension (organisation, group, job), to recognise their different impact on interns' commitment. First, we reviewed the OS practices for each dimension, and identified them according to the socialisation literature. We found that most of the socialisation practices were individualised tactics (Jones, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Second, we were looking for how those OS practices facilitated the individuals' learning about each dimension. We also reviewed the development of the interns' understanding of each dimension over time. For example, their understanding of the organisation's values, goals, structure, and policies; the job's responsibilities, tasks, and performance standard; the group's objectives, rules, and members' roles. Third, according to the participants' responses to the scenario-based question (the hypothetical job offers), we found that their decision to accept the job offer was influenced by their fit perceptions (P-J, P-O, P-G fit), particularly with their jobs. After that, we reviewed their fit perceptions with their organisation, group, and job to understand how fit perceptions influenced their intention to commit to the organisation at the end.

Figure 4.2 illustrates our analysis outcomes. It includes three main layers: (1) OS dimensions, the new order indicates their impact on their commitment, starting with the job as the main influencer, followed by the organisation, then the group; (2) the socialisation practices for each dimension, which were individualised practices; (3) fit perceptions (P-J, P-O, P-G fit). It shows that OS practices were influencing fit perceptions, which then influenced the interns' intention to commit. The impact of P-J fit on organisational commitment exceeded the impact of P-O and P-G fit, which is shown in the figure as dash arrows.

Figure 4.2: Findings Summary



4.4 Findings:

Our aim is to investigate the impact of OS on the interns' intention to commit. We found that OS dimensions (job, organisation, group) shaped the interns' socialisation experiences and affected their decision to consider the organisation for future employment. Individualised socialisation practices were provided to help interns adjust in the workplace. The socialisation process influenced their intention to commit to the organisation through their fit perceptions (P-J, P-O, P-G); while the P-J fit was the main influencer to their willingness to re-join the organisation permanently.

Our analysis shows that most of the socialisation practices were individualised, giving interns unique learning experiences. Jones (1986) states that individualised socialisation reflects the absence of structure and standardised programme. The context of the practices was individualised and informal, where they became part of their workgroups and learning took place on the job. The content of the practices was variable and random, as there were no structured stages for the learning process. Employers took the individualised socialisation approach for different reasons. First, most of the interns did not have fixed job responsibilities; instead, they were in task-based work. Each time they needed to learn a new task and practice it. Second, they all came from different backgrounds with different levels of skills and they were allocated to various positions. They also had limited time to learn and perform their jobs. The individuality and informality of the socialisation provided interns with the opportunity to make differentiated responses, deciding the content and method of their learning.

It would be the sort of thing where there were maybe training options, like based on individual things, rather than having it - either you have to be trained in everything that you might need, or none of what you need... Like if it was a choice between all or none, I'd go none and learn on the job... I'd rather learn as I go with a bit of instruction, than a full-one day, two days of studying a particular thing in that sort of setting. (Martin, interview-1)

I am actually very independent... It's very much self-management, which develops a lot of skills and that's great, and personally, I like this more and it works for me very well, because I have my own plan every day. (Alyssa, interview-2)

However, having a random and variable socialisation process increased a level of uncertainty. That is why interns engaged in proactive behaviour in order to learn about the workplace and

reduce uncertainty. Proactivity refers to newcomers' active role in learning about the work context. Ashford and Black (1996) define different proactive behaviours such as information seeking, feedback seeking, job-change negotiating, and networking. Interns needed to be proactive and seek information about their roles and work environment. They were looking for more useful knowledge through their own active efforts. For instance, to learn about the organisation, they needed to attend the meetings, and ask their co-workers informally. Even when they were interested in developing certain skills, they needed to initially look for an opportunity to learn these. Sometimes it was not an option for them to be proactive, but they had to search for guidance to do their tasks.

It's good because it's quite proactive, you've got to go and do it for yourself but obviously in the same vein I can always ask for help there. (Walter, interview-2)

Everyone was encouraging them to be active in the workplace, ask questions, attend events and be involved. Interns were satisfied with the individuality of their socialisation experiences, as it gave them the autonomy to perform their jobs and be selective with their learning. Especially, with the short time they had in the organisation, they had to tailor their own socialisation to suit their needs and preferences.

it's quite fun that, although I have a role in the marketing team, I can also step back and do other things I want, which I think is kind of the beauty of working with a company as big as [organisation] because although you are adding value, doing a role, you can also kind of be selfish and be like, I want to do this, I want to learn that and sort of go away and do it and they don't mind. (Ivana, interview-2)

Moreover, learning about the OS dimension through the socialisation enabled interns to develop a perception of their fit with each dimension. For instance, understanding their job responsibilities and meeting the required performance standard helped them to evaluate their match with their jobs (P-J fit). Likewise, acquiring knowledge about the organisation, and socialising with their groups influenced their P-O and P-G fit. We found that the interns' desire to come back and commit to the organisation was influenced by their fit perceptions. Since the internship was an opportunity for them to assess the organisation as a future employer, they were assessing their match with the organisational environment. However, the analysis shows that P-J fit was the main influence on their decision to return to the organisation, followed by P-O fit. While the P-G fit had the least impact. The match between their skills and abilities with job requirements influenced their

organisational commitment. Interns with low P-J fit were not willing to commit to the organisation, even if they experienced high P-O and P-G fit. For example, Chloe liked her team and the organisation as a whole, but she was not satisfied with her job. Hence, she did not have any intention of committing to the organisation.

The company is great, like the atmosphere is good, the people are good, everything is good. Everyone is very nice, so kind but like, it's just the type of job... I just didn't want to stay here [doing this job]. (Chloe, interview-2)

Next, we are going to present the socialisation practices for each OS dimension, and discuss how they influenced the interns' intention to commit to the organisation. Table 4.2 shows the interns responses to the OS practices.

4.4.1 Job:

The job socialisation was essential to help the interns acquire information about their roles and learn the required performance standard. Since this was the first work experience for most of them, they did not have a clear expectation of their work. Additionally, the organisations were offering internships for positions in several departments without any further details of the jobs. Interns applied for the internship without selecting any position, thus, they did not know their jobs' duties and responsibilities.

You're allocated to the department that you're most suited to, so it's always a bit of a surprise... At the interview, you discuss the things you're interested in... the company decides which department you are allocated to... That's why I can't really explain my responsibilities at the moment... I'm still learning. (Alyssa, Interview-1)

Therefore, it was significant for interns to understand their responsibilities and learn how to perform their tasks. The employers applied different socialisation practices to facilitate interns' job learning and skills development. The two main OS practices for job socialisation were on-the-job training and supervisory meetings. Both practices were implemented individually and informally.

First, **on-the-job training** was a practical and efficient way of learning, as it helped them grasp the job aspects while doing it. Few interns had fixed and structured job duties. Therefore, they were taught the work process through structured job training. One of their team trained them for a couple of days until they were able to carry on their work independently. This helped them to understand their jobs, which eliminated the ambiguity and stress from the beginning. However,

the majority of the interns did not have a fixed job description; instead they were employed in task-based work. Therefore, the job training was offered to them informally at the time they needed to learn the information. The person that assigned them a task explained it and provided the required resources. This gave them an opportunity to try various tasks, develop more skills and learn from different people.

Second, **supervisory meetings** were the backbone for the interns' performance improvement. The main purpose of the meetings was to review the interns' work performance and personal development. Some interns were having informal meetings regularly with their line managers. This offered them a friendly platform where they asked questions and discussed any issues. It was a major support for interns, by providing them guidance and feedback about their work. However, other interns did not have supervisory meetings, or get any constructive feedback. They were given brief comments on their tasks, such as 'please add this' or 'that is good'. This was not sufficient guidance to develop their performance. Thus, this was a setback in their learning and put more pressure on them to seek feedback.

I'll do a piece of work and then... they'll say, "Actually can you change this?"... and I'll make those changes. That's the level of feedback I get... what I'd like is to be able to sit down with my line manager and he'll say, "Yeah, looking at the past month, I think you did X, Y and Z really well. You might need to think a bit more about how you're doing in terms of A but B is really good... let's work on this for the next month."
(Martin, Interview- 4)

Furthermore, job socialisation not only affected the interns understanding of their roles, but it also influenced their perception of their jobs. It enabled them to fit easily with the job and improve their performance. Through that, they developed their perception of person-job (P-J) fit. For example, Alyssa expressed her satisfaction with her job, in the second interview, which was after completing her job training. She experienced a high P-J fit after gaining a better understanding of her job.

I really like it and it suits me perfectly... and my character, so I'm really enjoying my work. Whereas last meeting [first interview], I wasn't really sure what I was doing, so that was a little frustrating but it was hard, but right now, I pretty much know what I need to do and how to do it. (Interview-2)

During the internship, the interns were assessing their competencies and job requirements, as they were looking for their first full-time job after graduation. That is why their perception of P-J fit

influenced their willingness to return to the organisation and apply for a permanent job. When we hypothetically gave them a job offer, interns who believed that they fit with their jobs accepted the offer immediately, while interns who perceived that their jobs did not match their skills, rejected the job offer.

I would say no to that job because it's not within my skill set and it's not something that interests me... I think it's a good company and I would be interested in coming back, but obviously it depends a bit on the job. (Emma, Final Interview)

They all agreed that the most important factor to consider the organisation in the future was the job. This emphasises the importance of job socialisation for interns and how it could effectively influence their decision to re-join the organisation through their perception of the job.

4.4.2 Organisation:

The interns' aim was to understand the work environment and assess the organisation potentiality for future employment. Before starting the internship, their main sources of information were the company's website and reputation in the market place, as well as the previous interns' feedback. Accordingly, they had certain expectations about the workplace, but it was not enough to have a clear picture of the organisation. In fact, they needed to learn the organisation's values, goals, rules, and culture; thus, they were seeking to get that information during their internship. Different OS practices helped interns to learn about the organisation such as the orientation programme and the organisational meetings.

From day one, interns were introduced to the workplace through the '**orientation programme**'. However, the employers conducted their orientation differently, which was reflected in the interns' experiences. Management interns had two days of orientation, including a presentation about the company, a training workshop, and meetings with current workers. Then, they were introduced to their managers and teams. The interns spent the whole two days together, exploring the workplace, which had a great impact on them. It was a warm welcome and a good way to start the internship. This gave them a good impression of the organisation and helped them learn about the workplace.

It shows their serious approach to us, as to current or potential employees, and it does help a lot to slowly get involved with the company, and not just suddenly start in the job but understand it step-by-step. (Alyssa, Interview-1)

In contrast, engineering interns had a very brief orientation, where they had a presentation about the organisation, followed by a quick tour of the office. Then, they were taken to their desks and had to do an online test for health and safety issues. This brief orientation did not provide them with sufficient information about the workplace. Some of them were not even introduced to their managers. This made their adjustment harder, which was disappointing. They tried individually to settle down and seek help from others.

After my first day I was slightly disappointed because I hadn't actually done or achieved anything... I probably went into it thinking, 'Oh I'm going to have a great day. I'm going to learn lots...' I perhaps had too high expectations, and in reality that didn't happen. I wasted several hours with computer problems; sat there for a little bit not really knowing what to do and waiting for people to come and help me... I think I was expecting that I'd get used to it really quickly... and it's probably taken me longer in reality. (Ronald, Interview-1)

The first part of the orientation was conducted collectively, where interns went through a common learning experience. Then, the rest of it was individualised as each intern had his/her own experience with their jobs and teams. The early OS, such as the orientation programme, had a great impact on the interns' first impression of the organisation. It represented the beginning of their learning about the workplace. However, it was not enough, and they needed to seek more information about the organisation.

Furthermore, attending **meetings and conferences** within the organisational level was an effective way to learn about the organisation. Interns' attendance was not mandatory, but they were encouraged to attend. A few of them had the opportunity to participate and join the discussions about organisation strategy, plans, projects, and critical issues. This enabled them to meet other organisational members including senior managers. They were engaged with the workplace and viewed themselves as insiders. It offered them a clearer image of the organisation, which influenced their perception of it.

Moreover, the organisation socialisation influenced their perception of their fit with the organisation. Knowing about the organisation's values and culture enabled them to assess their match with it. This affected their desire to re-join the workplace as a graduate, which meant that their P-O fit perception had an impact on their intention to commit. However, P-J fit was the dominant influence on their decision to accept a permanent job offer. Even a high P-O fit did not

compensate for a low P-J fit. Interns whose skills and abilities did not match their jobs, rejected our hypothetical job offers, as they had no intention of committing to the organisation. Their willingness to return to the organisation in the future was subject to their perception of the P-J fit. This was possibly because the interns' main purpose was to find a permanent job that matched them. Thus, they cared about their perception of the job instead of the organisation.

I don't necessarily like the job I was doing, but the company as a whole is a good company to work for... It is just I don't like [the job]. (Martin, Final Interview)

4.4.3 Group:

The groups represented instrumental and social support for interns. Interns were relying on their groups to perform their tasks and learn about the workplace. This made them an essential socialisation agent. Therefore, it was important for interns to know their work group's goals, values, policies and members' roles, to help them fit with the group and know who could offer them help and support.

As an intern, we're here to learn, and the individuals in each team are key figures within that area, so the more you can network and get to know them, the more you might be able to learn and have future connections. (Emma, Interview-1)

Different OS practices helped interns to, not only learn about their groups, but also develop their relationship with them. All interns had weekly or monthly **group meetings**, which were like an update of the work progress. Everyone talked about their current project, and if they needed any resources. They also discussed any issues within the company like changes in the workplace regulations. This helped interns to get involved with the group and engage with them on a professional level. In addition, **group training** created a learning environment and encouraged knowledge sharing within the groups. It contributed to the interns' learning and development.

There were many **social events** within the groups, whether annual events like Christmas, or regular events, such as going out for lunch or drinks. There was also some volunteering work, as well as charitable activities. The events were conducted in and outside the workplace. The organisations were investing in social events to create a friendly work environment. Joining group activities helped the interns to leave the formality of the workplace and engage with their groups on a personal level. It was a good chance to share their interests and overcome their age and experience differences.

It's good to see people out of the working environment as well. I guess, the more you do, that they're less like colleagues and more like your friends, which in turn is good for the office because it means people work better together. (James, Interview-2)

Group socialisation helped interns learn about their group and develop their perception of their fit with the group. It was expected that their P-G fit perception would affect their decision to come back to the organisation; although we found that P-G fit had the least influence on their intention to commit. Fitting with the group was not the main purpose for them; instead, it was the means to learn and settle down in the workplace. Only when the interns' perception of P-G fit was combined with a high P-J and P-O fit, were they willing to accept a permanent job offer.

So, I'd accept it [job offer] because I really like the company, really like the people, really like the kind of scope of work that I've had... I'd reject the offer from a different company, just because of all the good things that I've had at this company. So, I'd accept it, kind of knowing what I'd be getting, knowing the employer. (James, Final Interview)

At the end, OS practices facilitate their learning about the three dimensions (job, organisation, and group). This influenced their perception of fitting with each dimension. The OS impact on interns' organisational commitment was through their fit perceptions (P-J, P-O, P-G fit). However, their fit perceptions did not have the same impact on their intention to commit to the organisation, as their perception of P-J fit was the dominant factor that influenced their desire to return. This emphasises the importance of job socialisation and its impact on their future commitment.

4.5 Discussion:

This paper explores the impact of OS on the interns' intention to commit to the organisation. The findings reveal that the socialisation process affected their future organisational commitment through their fit perceptions. The P-J fit was the key influencer on their organisational commitment. This was contrary to the predominant assumption that P-O fit had the leading impact on organisational commitment (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001). The interns' priority was their job because it enabled them to practice their profession, and develop their skills for future career opportunities. This is expected to be the case with the young workers as well (Calk & Patrick, 2011), who are establishing their career.

The findings show that interns had individualised socialisation that reflected the absence of structure, as they were socialising more by default than design (Ashforth et al., 1997). As they had task-based jobs, their learning varied according to each task and its required skills. Individualised socialisation offered the interns a unique learning experience (Jones, 1986). However, it was not providing all of the information that they needed. Therefore, individuals had to make some proactive efforts to learn about the workplace (Bauer, Morrison, & Callister, 1998; Jones, 1986). They were trying to gain some control over their socialisation process to reduce the uncertainty and acquire useful information. Proactivity research has shown that individuals can play an essential role in the socialisation process by seeking information and networking with organisational members to fit with the work environment (Ashford & Black, 1996; Morrison, 1993). This offered them the freedom to explore the workplace and get involved in many work areas, while being selective in their learning choices. This was true, especially with the limited time they had in the organisation.

In addition, through the socialisation process, interns acquired knowledge about the OS dimensions (job, organisation, group). This influenced their perception of their fit with each dimension. For example, understanding their jobs let them realise the match between their skills and desires with the job requirements (P-J fit). The socialisation literature addresses the match between employees' properties (e.g. values, abilities) and organisational properties (e.g. values, culture, job requirements). The degree of the match is positively associated with newcomers' organisational commitment level, where a higher match can lead to a stronger bond (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). That is why interns' fit perceptions were affecting their intention to commit to the organisation in the future. Interns who were satisfied with their fit with the organisational environment were more willing to re-join the organisation. We found that individuals' fit perceptions (e.g. P-J fit) were the proximal outcome of the socialisation process, while the distal outcome was their intention to commit. Therefore, OS was affecting interns' organisational commitment through their fit perceptions.

Yet, the multiple types of fit did not have the same degree of impact on interns' commitment. We argue that the P-J fit was the main influencer of interns' organisational commitment, followed by P-O fit. Whereas the P-G fit was the least to influence interns' intention to commit. Interns' perception of their fit with their jobs was influencing their willingness to accept a permanent job

offer. Contrary to the argument that P-O fit is associated with organisation-related outcomes, such as organisational commitment, intention to quit, and turnover (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001), P-J fit is mainly associated with job-related outcomes, such as job satisfaction and performance (Kristof, 1996). The meta-analysis of (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005) about the consequences of individuals' fit at work highlights the weak impact of P-G fit on organisational commitment and intention to quit. They also state that P-O fit perception has the highest impact on employees' organisational commitment. Most of these studies have examined fit perceptions of full-time employees. Employees with high P-O fit and low P-J fit are expected to stay in the organisation, develop their skills and change their job internally (Becker & Billings, 1993; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). In this case, a low P-J fit can lead to job turnover, but not organisational turnover (Hollenbeck, 1989).

However, in the internship context, it was all about the job. Interns were looking for a real work experience where they could gain a better understanding of their career choices. The job was the main source of their learning and development, which might enhance their future career opportunities (Gault et al., 2000). For example, Mark believed that, as an intern in a big company, he could not work on challenging assignments. Thus, he decided to apply for a graduate job in a smaller size company that could offer him higher job responsibilities. For interns, the importance of having a challenging job might overshadow the importance of the supervisor and the organisational environment as a whole (Dixon, Cunningham, Sagas, Turner, & Kent, 2005). Since they are in the early stage of their career, their jobs were expected to be their main concern. Additionally, the temporary employment allowed interns to experience their jobs and the organisation (Zhao & Liden, 2011), without any obligation to return. If they were unsatisfied with their experience, they were able to leave and look for better opportunities in other companies. Thus, when they found a lower match with their jobs, they were discouraged to apply for a graduate position in the organisation.

This could also be related to the young workers who are establishing their career. For example, millennials (or generation Y) who were born from 1981 to 2000, are the largest generation to enter the workforce recently (Munro, 2014). Millennials are more concerned about their individual needs rather than organisational needs (Rosenzweig, 2010). They are known as "job hoppers" due to their tendency to choose multiple career paths (Cherame, Sturman, & Walsh, 2007; Myers &

Sadaghiani, 2010), unlike previous generations who have stayed in one organisation for most of their career. Millennials are quicker to change jobs, causing difficulties for organisations to motivate and retain them (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010; Rupp, Vodanovich, & Crede, 2006). In their early career they usually do not experience a long-term commitment to their employers, although, when they evolve professionally they become more committed to their organisations (Buckley, Viechnicki, & Baru, 2015). Calk and Patrick (2011) found that one of the highest motivational needs for millennials at work was the ‘actualisation’ which refers to the “concerns for more challenging and meaningful work that allows for creativity and leads to a sense of personal fulfillment”. This means millennials are ready to take career-related risks to have more challenging and satisfying work, where stable and secure jobs with expected salaries and benefits are not attractive to them.

We can assume that there is a shift in the individuals’ priorities, especially from the young workers organisation needs to individuals’ needs. This was shown in our findings. First, interns were satisfied with the individualised socialisation process because it gave them a degree of autonomy to follow their preferences and be selective with their learning choices. It also allowed them to learn by doing, having their own learning experiences taken into consideration with their different skills and interests. Although, some scholars found that interns preferred institutionalised socialisation, such as formal, structured training (Feldman & Weitz, 1990; Gruman & Saks, 2011). We disagree with this, as our findings show that interns were looking for autonomy to learn and do their jobs, instead of receiving a set of messages and being forced to respond and behave in a certain way. This means individualised socialisation enabled them to focus on their needs rather than organisation needs.

Second, the job was more critical when it came to the interns’ commitment. They were willing to sacrifice their relationship with the organisation in order to search for a challenging and fulfilling job. The P-J fit was strongly influencing their intention to commit to the organisation. This was followed by P-O fit, while P-G fit had the least impact on their organisational commitment. That is why job socialisation was critical for interns. Poor job socialisation, such as a lack of feedback, or job training, was more frustrating for them than the absence of other socialisation practices, like group social events or meetings.

This addresses the significant impact of the job dimension on the interns' decision to re-join the organisation permanently. This has implications for employers, as the job is the main element in attracting and retaining interns.

4.6 Implications and limitations:

This research is one of the first to study organisational socialisation and the intention to commit in the internship context. It explores the impact of the OS on the interns' intention to commit to the organisation. We found that the OS dimensions had different impacts on the commitment, where the job dimension had the highest impact on organisational commitment. This could start a new era where the job becomes central to the individuals' work commitment. Our findings have several theoretical and practical implications that contribute to socialisation literature.

First, this paper investigates individuals' future commitment by referring to their intention to return and commit to the organisation. It also explores how their experiences of OS could influence their future organisational commitment. Most of the commitment research has examined whether individuals (un)commit to the organisation in the presence (Becker, 1960; Heffner & Rentsch, 2001; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday et al., 1979; Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001; Whitener & Walz, 1993). The concept of 'intention to commit' is underdeveloped in existing research, so studying it provides new insight, which contributes to the commitment literature.

Second, we found that socialisation practices affect commitment through fit perceptions. This means that the main role of the socialisation practices was to facilitate the individuals' learning about their job, group, and organisation. This is where the accumulation of the individuals' knowledge about the OS dimensions builds up their fit perceptions with each dimension, which then influences their commitment. This supports the previous socialisation research which has considered individuals' fit perception as a mediator of the relationship between OS and its distal outcomes (e.g. commitment) (Haueter et al., 2003; Saks et al., 2007).

Third, examining the socialisation of three OS dimensions (job, organisation, group) helped us identify their distinct influence on socialisation outcomes. The analysis shows that job dimension was strongly influencing interns' future commitment. This emphasises the importance of job socialisation in facilitating the individuals' job fit, which then affected their commitment. Most socialisation research has heavily studied OS tactics without examining the socialisation of each

dimension (Bauer et al., 2007; Jones, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Yet, identifying the different influences of the dimensions on socialisation outcomes can offer new insight into the OS process. It can enable employers to support the socialisation of the dimensions according to the desired outcomes.

Fourth, P-J fit was the key influencer of the interns' intention to commit to the organisation. This contradicts the predominant perspective that matching with the organisation is the key to organisational commitment. Earlier studies have identified P-J fit with job-related outcomes, and P-O fit with organisation-related outcomes (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001). Most of these studies were conducted in a permanent employment context. For the internship, the job was the fundamental OS dimension that highly influenced the interns' commitment. Short-term employment gives interns the opportunity to assess their competencies and job requirements, and make their decision to accept a permanent job offer. Hence, the job is expected to replace the organisation as the primary target of commitment for interns. This highlights the major influence of the job on interns' willingness to consider the organisation for future employment. It means, in order to attract and retain interns, employers need to offer them a meaningful job and effective socialisation practices that help them understand their role and perform it successfully.

Similarly, the importance of the P-J fit could be worth considering in contemporary work context that is taking place outside the traditional organisational form (Cappelli & Keller, 2013). For example, with gig economy, where people are employed on the spot without any promise of future employment, the job plays an important role in maintaining workers, as there is less attachment to the employers (Friedman, 2014). The gig employment is timeless compared to traditional employment with a long-term contract. Therefore, it is expected that P-J fit will be the main element that attracts and retains the gig workers. Future research can examine the impact of gig workers' fit perceptions on their commitment.

Furthermore, this adds a new perspective on how employers should brand their organisations to attract interns. Employer branding aims to let job seekers know about the company's values, in order to find similarities between themselves and the company. Obviously, the focus is on the P-O fit, due to its strong association with organisational attraction (Cable & Judge, 1996; Judge & Cable, 1997). However, in this study, the job was influencing the interns' attraction to the

organisation, and their willingness to return as graduate employees. For instance, interns were unconcerned about the organisation's compensation and benefits system, while their priority was to find a job that matched their skills, desire, and abilities. Therefore, to attract and retain interns, employer branding should emphasise challenging and meaningful jobs in the organisation, which provide learning and career development opportunities.

Mainly, our findings highlight the importance of HR practices in attracting, selecting and retaining interns who fit with the organisation. This should start with the job design, where human resource managers need to create meaningful and interesting jobs that can contribute to the individuals' learning and development. According to the work characteristics model, the core job dimensions such as skills variety, task identity (the sense of completing an entire piece of work), task significance (the impact of work), autonomy, and feedback, can lead to experiences of meaningfulness, responsibility, and awareness of work results, which then enhance work motivation, job satisfaction, performance, and decrease turnover intention (Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Johns, Xie, & Fang, 1992; Renn & Vandenberg, 1995). This means job characteristics could influence interns to perceive their jobs as an opportunity for learning and growth, which could enhance their commitment. Then, the recruitment and selection process can help ensure that the interns' abilities and desires match the job demands. This could enhance their perception of complementary job fit, when the individuals' needs are met by job resources (needs-supplies fit) and their skills meet job requirements (demands-abilities fit). This could be reinforced by providing effective job socialisation, where training can help them develop their skills and knowledge. This can improve their perception of P-J fit, which can highly affect their intention to commit to the organisation.

The research has several limitations that can be developed in the future. First, we started to examine the socialisation process from the first week of the internship. This could be extended to include the earlier stage of socialisation before entering the organisation (anticipatory socialisation). For example, the recruitment and selection phase could show us the development of the interns' fit perceptions from the beginning, and how the selection process would contribute to that. Second, our participants were all undergraduate students, who were working in paid internships. It would be valuable to explore other types of internships, such as summer or unpaid internships, as well as voluntary internships with non-profit organisations. It could also be

extended to include other work arrangements such as apprenticeships and graduate jobs. The type of employment could shape the individuals' work priorities differently, and influence the impact of OS as well as fit perceptions of their commitment. This could address new insights into OS practices, dimensions, and outcomes. Furthermore, the study could be developed by investigating a larger number of participants in different work contexts. Future research can study how the socialisation of different OS dimensions can interlink and affect each other. For example, how the job socialisation could influence the group socialisation and P-G fit. The socialisation of other work entities, such as profession, supervisor, and clients, can be addressed to explore the impact of their socialisation on employees' fit perceptions and behaviours. This could offer a richer understanding of the socialisation process, and explore other OS dimensions.

4.7 Conclusion:

This paper contributes to the socialisation research by studying the intention to commit in the internship context, which is absent from the existing literature. Focusing on the OS dimensions (job, organisation, group), enables us to identify the varying nature of their impact on commitment. Our aim was to answer the question: 'How does OS impact the interns' intention to commit to the organisation?' The results show that socialisation practices were facilitating the individuals' learning about each OS dimension, which then influenced their fit perceptions with their jobs, organisations, and groups. Therefore, OS was influencing the individuals' commitment through their fit perception where the P-J fit was the leading influencer on their commitment, and then the P-O fit, while the P-G fit was the least one.

This addresses the important impact of the job on interns' future commitment to the organisation. It means, to recruit and retain interns, organisations need to promote challenging and meaningful work, while, at the same time, providing them with an efficient socialisation process that facilitates their adjustment and allows them to have the freedom to select their learning contents. This could become more relevant as more young generations join the workplace. We contribute to the socialisation literature, which has greatly emphasised the association of P-O fit with employees' commitment (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001). We also bring a new perspective on P-J fit as essential for individuals' organisational commitment, instead of P-O and P-G fit.

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Table 4.2: Interns Responses about the OS Practices.

OS dimensions	OS practices	Comments
Job	On-the-job training	<p>Someone's been assigned to help train me, to show me the ropes, help me through it and develop what I can bring to the team. So I've had different documents printed out and explained to me.... I'm being trained and eased into the job as I go along. I still have to go through things with my trainer before they get signed off on by them. (Emma, Interview-1)</p> <p>The person sat next to me who is kind of, in a way, looking over me, just going through certain aspects of what I'll be doing on a day-to-day, showing me how to do it... so that was about two weeks... I would do something and then he would check over it in that sense. (Walter, Interview-2)</p> <p>I am satisfied. I think probably on the job learning is working well. I think my boss is very helpful and explains everything to me, so over one to one basis, I am satisfied with that. (Ronald, Interview-4)</p> <p>I feel like it is just more when I'm working with someone, they'll just explain to me how to do it. Nothing actually like formal training... It's going good, for me it works just like coming and explaining to me every time. (Sara, Interview-2)</p> <p>It has been as much task orientated as the learning has been, 'here is this task we need Martin to do. Here is what we need to teach him to do'... I feel like that was not may be as much targeted learning as it could have been... like not necessarily sitting down and training, but just like on the job. (Martin, Final Interview)</p>
	Supervisory meetings	<p>We have monthly meetings and it's mainly me reporting to her and asking her for feedback, because that's what I find most valuable, because I would like to know what I'm doing right and what I'm doing wrong... We decided that my assessment would just go by my targets, so whenever I reach my target and I've done well, this is a very visual and easy way to assess somebody. (Alyssa, Interview-2)</p> <p>With my manager, it has to be monthly... I'm happy with the feedback I get. It's been constructive, so I think it encompasses a lot and it's a style that works for me quite well because my manager</p>

	<p>keeps a record of what we've discussed and what I've said I'd like to do moving forwards, so we review it. It's a bit like a professional development plan but on a slightly lower scale, so a bit more informal than that. (Emma, Interview-2)</p> <p>It [manager meeting] was really about my development... Obviously feedback about how I'm doing in my role, which was quite good. And then also a bit of feedback in terms of how I'm getting on well with people, whether I fit in or not. Pleased. Quite good feedback. (Walter, Interview-3)</p> <p>There's not really any assessment... My feedback is through my one-to-ones with my manager every week. So I meet her for half an hour every week and we talk through progress and work. Like how things are going, she answers my questions, talks through anything that I've found interesting... I really like that you have that weekly catch up with the manager; I think that's really nice. (Ivana, Interview-2)</p>
Organisation	<p>Orientation</p> <p>We had two days of induction with the Learning and Development Department and HR people. So we had an introduction to the company... then we had speed dating [with managers]... we had to have a three-minute conversation with them to get to know the company or them as a person. Then we had a few other presentations by current graduates who work here and who did the placement before... at the end, we were actually invited to our department to meet the managers and everyone. (Alyssa, Interview-1)</p> <p>We had a two-day on-boarding session with the HR representative which helped us look at what the company does, and company rules and regulations, what do they stand for, which was very enlightening... it does help create a clearer picture of the company and the company expectations, the people that I'll be working with. It all helps to build an image that I can then process and apply to the job and how I'm going to do it. (Emma, Interview-1)</p> <p>The induction itself was good. It was a big presentation about the company, and it had other interesting stuff that wasn't on their website, more of the extra opportunities that we hear of in the industry work. Also, other things, like volunteering, wellbeing and development, was emphasised on those and they told you more about them. (Erica, Interview-1)</p> <p>Once I'd had my little HR induction, I sort of got a little tour of the office and then I got walked around by basically - she's a person from HR - and introduced to a few people... she then showed</p>

		<p>me my desk. I didn't actually know who my manager was at this point, until probably a couple of hours in, when the person sitting next to me, sort of said to me, "Oh by the way, I'm your manager," so that's how I found out who my manager was. (Ronald, Interview-1)</p> <p>It was quite quick; there wasn't really too much like orientation or anything like that... we arrived and we were met by the [HR officer]... She went through a load of thing with us and then kind of took us around the office and dropped everyone off at their teams... I was asked to do some online, like training, and then I just started straightaway with the work. (Sara, Interview-1)</p>
	<p>Organisation meetings & conferences</p>	<p>There have been quite a few networking events at the company, which are also really good for meeting people. I ended up talking to one of the founding partners of the company at the last one I went to... an open invite to everyone at the company. The last one I went to was for charity run by the company... So, that was a kind of showcasing event for everything that they've been doing in the past year. (James, Interview-1)</p> <p>We met with some of the senior people in the organisation, and a couple of the most senior staff... we discussed what the company is going to be like in 20 years. There was quite a lot of debate about that, and you just kind of think how everything actually runs... people had quite strong opinions and stuff like, pay, and things that may be quite touchy subjects, but this was a chance to kind of get everyone's opinion out to the one important person in the company right now in the UK. (Sara, Interview-3)</p> <p>We had this end of year sales conference event... so I met quite a lot of important people in the business... it was really good, inspiring. I really like how they took the trouble to have a variety of different speakers... got the Head of Marketing to have a chat with us about the plan for that and then they also had different areas of the business to come and chat... it also helped me connect all the different parts of the business and how they all interlinked together. (Jennifer, Final Interview)</p>
Group	<p>Group meetings</p>	<p>We had a group meeting for our whole department... where they just talked through the performance of the group, financing... There's a quick summary of every project that the office was doing, so it's good to see what everyone else is up to, because previously I had no idea. And they were talking about how the company is doing, views of Brexit... We talked about the results of a staff survey.</p>

	<p>They told everyone what everyone was happy with and told everyone where the company was going wrong from an employers' perspective, which was quite interesting. (James, Interview-2)</p> <p>It's interesting to see what different things are going on... It's more how the company is run that's interesting than actually any development to myself or anything. I don't feel I get much benefit out of it, other than knowing what different people are doing. (Mark, Interview-3)</p> <p>It's helpful to see what's going on, but I do play quite a passive role... There have been one or two occasions where I've had things to say, because... I was responsible for quite a lot of different stuff in the project, ... there were bits where I would have things to contribute in the meetings... it's just a general update, 'This is where I'm at and this is what I'm doing,' which is quite helpful to see and hear. (Martin, Interview-3)</p> <p>This month we had a meeting and we had a team breakfast, which was great and it was not as official. It was a more relaxed atmosphere, but we still talked about business and stuff, but it was more of a friendly interaction, which is great for bonding and understanding and just getting to know your team members better. (Alyssa, Interview-2)</p> <p>They are useful... because I can find out more about what other people had been doing and then, like if I wanted to, I could ask to see what they do and I could help them... it's useful for the team as a whole because you know like what people are up to... then if you need help then there are people there that can help you. (Erica, Interview-2)</p>
Group training	<p>I've had a couple of tutorials where various people have given presentations about how to use different computer programmes, talked us through it, and we've all sat round a table with our laptops trying to follow. (Ronald, Interview-1)</p> <p>We had training. It was just for our department, from 'Underwriting Support'... having a talk with us and explaining how income protection schemes work, but it was done for the whole team. (Alyssa, Interview-2)</p> <p>We had training for one piece of software, so that was just videos... we watched it and then we had like a big document that we could read through. (Sara, Interview-2)</p>

	<p>We had the whole Structures Department... there was a forum where we had a day off just doing talks and discussions and stuff like that... There are twice-monthly talks and stuff that happen... It was quite interesting and at the forum people spoke about each of the projects they were working on and how they were developing them and what's happening at each stage... then we had a quick sketching exercise and we were set into groups and had to do a really quick design project in ten minutes. (Mark, Interview-3)</p>
Social activities	<p>We had a Christmas party, which was good fun. We went for a site visit... It's the biggest structural engineering project in the country at the moment. That was really interesting. Then afterwards we went to the pub... It was organised by the heads of department. (James, Interview-2)</p> <p>I guess we had the hot marathon... I did it as part of, like, the team. That was a really big thing, we did a lot of charity, kind of fund raising for that. (Sara, Interview-3)</p> <p>I think it's very important. We just all get on really well together. It's like quite a social team. Everyone gets involved in all the sports and stuff, so it's just a nice, like, atmosphere. So we kind of meet up rather than just all coming in and working, sitting down, not really talking to each other and just going on... So, it's nice. (Sara, Interview-4)</p> <p>Sometimes we have team brunches in the office, like everyone buys food and we just share it. I'm very happy and lucky with my team and they're all great. (Alyssa, Interview-2)</p> <p>I think when we take ourselves outside of the work environment, it's a lot more relaxed and... people chat a lot more... it was only a kind of a Friday at the pub... I got to find out a bit about people like outside of work and what their interests are... I think it was good. (Jennifer, Interview-4)</p> <p>It was quite nice to be with the team and not in the workplace... just to be on a more social level, even though it's quite social in here... it was quite nice to go somewhere else for lunch with some of the team. (Walter, Interview-2)</p>

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction:

This chapter will offer an integrative discussion of the research papers to highlight their interrelated outcomes. This will be followed by the theoretical contributions, practical implications, limitations, and suggestions for future studies, and then a final conclusion.

5.2 Integrative Discussion:

Each paper is focused on different aspects of commitment. However, they are all interrelated and contribute to answering the research main question, which is, ‘How does organisational socialisation impact the dynamics of the interns’ workplace commitment?’ (See table 5.1).

The research explores the nature of the individuals’ commitment in the internship context. The main characteristic of this context is the temporary nature of employment. Interns were viewed as temporary employees by their co-workers, and they were aware of their limited time in the organisation. Hence, they understood that they were not permanent members of the organisation. Thus, they were not willing to invest in their relationships with others, except, when they intended to return as graduates. For example, Martin was not keen to put in any effort to develop relationships with his colleagues. He said:

I’ve not got loads of time to be thinking, ‘I want to spend it with these people and get to know them,’ especially when it’s such a short term thing as well, like I’m not here for that long. It would be a bit different if I was going to be working next to them every day for the next five years, but I’m only going to see them for another six months... If it was permanent, yeah, there would be more incentive to get to know the people you’re with, if you’re here permanently. (Interview-3)

The time was inadequate to develop an emotional attachment to others or even create a valuable investment at work. Therefore, the interns’ aim was to utilise this time carefully to get the best out of their internship through their learning and development.

Table 5.1 Research Paper Outline

	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3
Title	“It is all about Me” - An investigation of interns’ workplace commitment	The dynamics of interns’ workplace commitment	The impact of organisational socialisation on interns’ intention to commit
Topics	The nature of commitment, and workplace targets of commitment	The dynamics of workplace commitment	Organisational socialisation and individuals’ intention to commit
Research sub-questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the nature of interns’ commitment? • What are the targets of their commitment in this context? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do interns’ multiple commitments change over time? • What are the antecedents for these changes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does OS impact the interns’ intention to commit to the organisation?
Methodology		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three professional service firms (PSFs) in the UK • Group of 20 interns • A qualitative longitudinal study • Semi-structured interviews at five points • Total of 103 interviews 	
Main contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Klein et al.’s (2012) reconceptualisation of commitment • Identify self-commitment (Me) • Classify workplace targets: proximal and distal targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify types of dynamics of commitment: unstable and stable • and the antecedents of commitment change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the influence of OS on commitment through fit perceptions • Emphasise the key impact of person-job fit on organisational commitment

The first paper shows that interns were committed to themselves (Me), focusing on their own interests. They were looking for immediate benefits, such as getting involved in different projects or training. They were interested in the current impact of proximal targets', which made them more committed to them than the organisation. Furthermore, interns' commitment was a conscious decision made to manage their multiple commitments (Klein et al., 2012). This means commitment is a bond that does not require time to evolve, it can change gradually or abruptly depending on the person's will. Interns were assessing the targets' impact and asking themselves 'Who is worthy of my commitment?' Accordingly, they decided the amount of time, attention, and effort they were willing to offer each target.

This brings us to the second paper, which examines the dynamic nature of commitment. It states that the nature of the targets' impact influences the duration and the stability of interns' commitment bonds. When interns were committed to a target because of its immediate impact on them (e.g. on-the-job training), their commitment was consistently changing depending on the work circumstances (e.g. training completion). As a result, they experienced volatile multiple commitments, which can easily change and end (unstable commitment). However, when interns were committed to a target because of its future (long-term) impact on them such as graduate employment, their commitment was more steady and developing gradually (stable commitment). In this case, interns' commitment was associated with their intention to commit to the organisation, and their commitment was influenced by their fit perception with the work environment (job, organisation and group), which impacted their decision to consider the organisation for future employment.

This takes us to the third paper, which shows that individuals' future organisational commitment is influenced by their fit perceptions (Person-Job (P-J) fit, Person-Organisation (P-O) fit, and Person-Group (P-G) fit). The empirical data reveals that the impact of the socialisation process on commitment was through their fit perceptions. When interns felt that they matched with the organisational environment, they were willing to return and commit to the organisation. However, the job fit had the most impact on their organisational commitment, followed by the organisation, where the group had the least impact. Interns prioritise their job because it enables them to practice their profession, and develop their skills for future career opportunities. This shows their commitment to themselves and their focus on their own needs, which takes us back to the first

paper 'It's all about Me'. It indicates that their main concern is what they can get from the organisation as a whole, whether of short or long-term benefit.

Therefore, interns were acting proactively to get involved in the workplace to learn and develop during their internship. Proactivity refers to individuals' active role in learning about the workplace. Since joining an organisation could be associated with a lack of control, which leads to stress and anxiety, individuals need to take action to gain control and predictability (Ashford & Black, 1996; Fisher, 1986). For example, employers were offering interns different learning opportunities such as training and conferences, yet, they needed to be active and participate in the events. There are three general types of proactive behaviours, which interns often engaged in: positive framing (interpreting the environment in an optimistic way), sense-making (information and feedback seeking), and relationship building (networking, building relationship with one's boss, and general socialisation) (Ashford & Black, 1996).

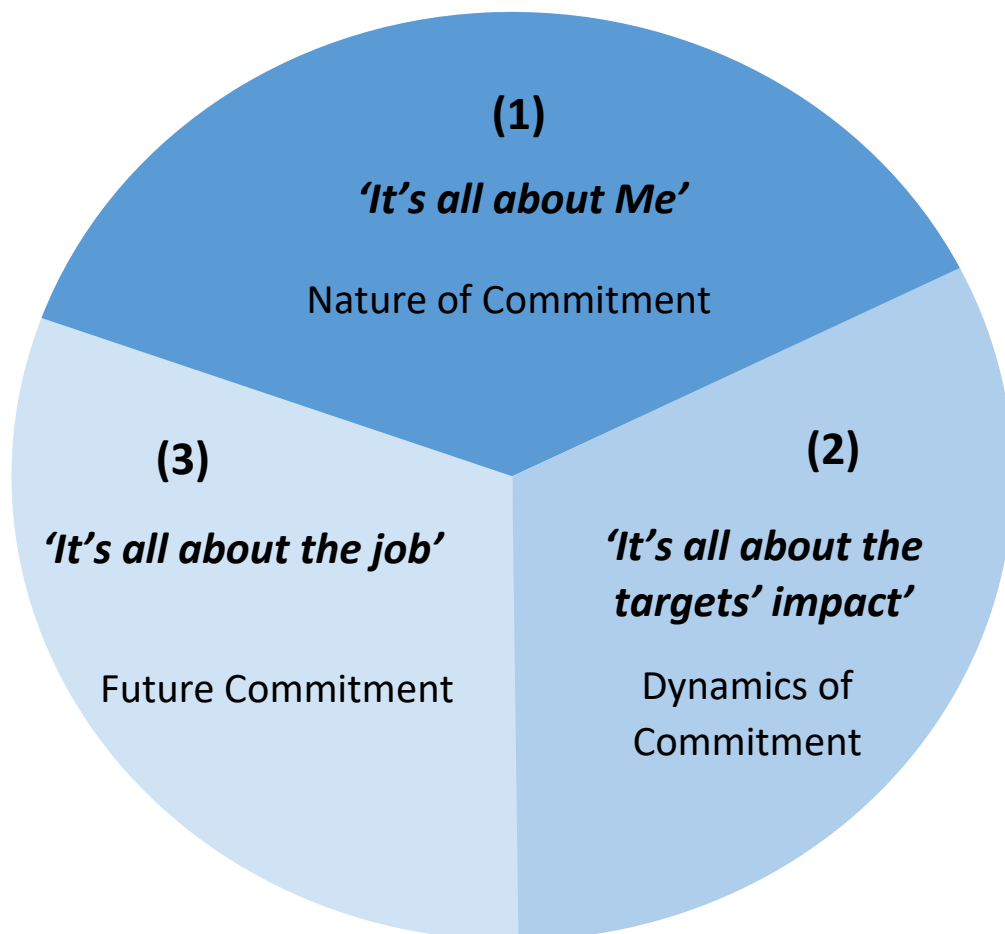
There are different reasons that could encourage interns to act proactively. They had an individualised socialisation process, which included informal, random and variable practices. The individuality and informality of the socialisation offered interns unique experiences and allowed them to make differentiated responses, by tailoring their own socialisation. However, interns engaged in proactive behaviour in order to reduce the uncertainty that was caused by the random and variable socialisation process. Individuals' proactive behaviour such as information seeking, feedback seeking, and general socialising (e.g. attending social events) can contribute to the socialisation outcomes (Ashford and Black, 1996). Morrison (1993) found that the frequency of information seeking was associated with positive socialisation outcomes such as task mastery, role clarity, and social integration. Therefore, the combination of socialisation practices and the interns' proactive behaviour were facilitating their learning about the organisational environment. This consistent with previous socialisation studies, which found that newcomers' adjustment in the work environment is affected by OS practices besides their proactive behaviour (Ashford and Black, 1996; Morrison, 1993; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000).

Furthermore, for most interns this was their first work experience, thus, they tended to explore themselves (e.g. interests, ability, and skills) in relation to work. This encouraged them to act proactively and get involved in different responsibilities and workplace activities. At the same time, because of the temporality of the internship context, interns needed to learn about the

workplace, master their job, and assess the organisation in a short time. Thus, they had to utilize their time consciously and take the initiative to use all the available resources and opportunities to achieve that. This also was reflected in their workplace commitment. As they were initially making the decision to commit to the targets that could contribute to their work, learning, and development. They were willingly dedicating themselves and offering their time, attention and effort to those targets. Mainly, proactivity was the individuals' approach to have a successful internship, which can be seen as a common thread through the research papers.

As we can see, the papers' outcomes are interrelated and contribute to answering the main research question (See figure 5.1). Importantly, even though they sit at the fulcrum of the research question, they have different theoretical and practical implications that contribute to commitment and socialisation research.

Figure 5.1: A Representations of the Research Papers



5.3 Theoretical Contributions:

This research is one of the first to study the impact of OS on the dynamics of multiple commitments in an internship context. The results from this research make several theoretical contributions to commitment and socialisation literature, which I am going to discuss in the next section. I will also explain how research outcomes contribute to the future of work research.

First, with all the attention that has been given to the research on commitment, there is still considerable confusion and disagreement about the concept of commitment. At the same time, Meyer and Allen's (1984, 1991) three-component model (TCM) (affective, normative, and continuance) has been the predominant model in commitment research for decades (Cohen, 2003), while most of the commitment studies were based on individuals' commitment within traditional employment (Becker, 1960; Heffner & Rentsch, 2001; Meyer & Allen, 1984; Mowday et al., 1979; Rhoades et al., 2001; Whitener & Walz, 1993). Therefore, we need to challenge the conceptualisation of commitment in a new work context such as the internship context.

The first paper describes the interns' self-commitment and how it influences their commitment to other targets. This is a valuable outcome that offers a new understanding of individuals' self-commitment and explains the motive of their workplace commitment. Importantly, the research results support Klein et al.'s (2012) concept of commitment. It shows that interns' commitment is their choice to dedicate themselves to work towards the targets' benefits. This view of commitment is relevant within the internship context. Interns are working temporarily in the organisation; thus, they have less time to create valuable investments or develop emotional attachments. However, other conceptualisations of commitment which define it as an investment outcome (Becker, 1960; Meyer & Allen, 1991), an exchange (Wiener, 1982), or an attachment (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979) could be more relevant within a longer employment context (e.g. full-time employees). This means that the nature of commitment could vary depending on the work context. Therefore, we still need to re-question the predominant assumptions of the concept of commitment beyond the traditional work context.

Second, studying multiple targets of commitment in the internship context is a valuable contribution to the commitment research, as the organisation has been considered the leading target of intern's commitment (Dixon et al., 2005; Rose, Teo, & Connell, 2014). This research identifies the workplace targets of commitment and classifies them according to their different impacts on

individuals. The proximal targets, such as workgroups, have an immediate impact on interns' work, while the distal targets, such as organisations, have a long-term impact. Therefore, the proximal targets are more salient than the organisation, which is reflected in individuals' commitment. This is a significant contribution, as it highlights the important impact of proximal targets on interns' work commitment, which is absent from the existing literature.

Third, this is the first qualitative longitudinal study that examines the dynamics of multiple commitments in internship context. It aims to challenge the predominant assumption of commitment as a stable bond by investigating the interactions and changes of commitment bonds. The second paper contributes to the existing knowledge of commitment by identifying the different types of dynamics of commitment (unstable and stable), and the antecedents of commitment change. In contrast to the prior research, I argue that people can simultaneously experience multiple commitment bonds with different types of dynamics. The pace of commitment change could differ depending on the desired targets' impact on individuals (immediate, long-term). The duration of commitment can vary with a target, and the strength of the bond can change during that time.

In addition, Klein, Brinsfield, Cooper, and Molloy (2017) define the end of the individuals' commitment as a 'quondam of commitment' that is "a state which a person no longer has a consequential commitment bond" (p. 8). They declare that a quondam of commitment is a result of a substantial decrease in the strength of a commitment, where the decrease should be large enough, so the prior commitment bond no longer exists. Yet, the findings indicate that people have the choice to abruptly change their commitment, or end it. This means individuals are intentionally deciding to end their commitment, according to their current circumstances. As a result, commitment can suddenly end without gradually decreasing, since it refers to the people's decision of maintaining or ending their bond. This conceptualises commitment as a dynamic bond that can change gradually or abruptly. It is a significant contribution to the commitment theory, offering a deeper understanding of the nature of commitment. It also addresses the need for research in the development and change of multiple commitments over time (Klein, 2016).

Fourth, this research examines individuals' future commitment by referring to their intention to commit to the organisation. Prior research claims that interns' organisational commitment develops during their internship and then at the end it influences their desire to return (Breitsohl

& Ruhle, 2016; Hurst, Good, & Gardner 2012). However, I argue that the interns' motive for organisational commitment was determined by their intention to return in the future. When they felt the desire to re-join the workplace and had an opportunity for employment, they decided to invest more in the organisation and dedicate themselves to the work. Thus, interns' organisational commitment is already associated with their willingness to return. The research also addresses the impact of individuals' future organisational commitment on their bond to other work entities such as jobs and workgroups. The concept of 'intention to commit' is underdeveloped in existing research, so studying it provides a new insight, which contributes to the commitment literature.

Fifth, most of socialisation research has comprehensively studied the OS process in the workplace as a whole without examining the socialisation of each OS dimension (job, organisation and group) (Bauer et al., 2007; Jones, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Therefore, the third paper contributes to the OS literature by examining the three socialisation dimensions, which allows us to distinguish between their various impacts on socialisation outcomes (e.g. commitment). This offers a richer understanding of the impact of the OS process on individuals' behaviour. It also enables employers to develop the OS dimensions that will lead to the desired outcomes. Additionally, the research shows that the socialisation process affects commitment through fit perceptions. The main role of the socialisation practices was to facilitate individuals' learning about the OS dimensions (job, group and organisation), which then influences their perceptions of their match with each dimension. This supports the prior socialisation research, which found that individuals' fit perception is the influencer of the relationship between OS and its distal outcomes (e.g. commitment) (Haueter, Macan, & Winter, 2003; Saks, Uggerslev, & Fassina, 2007).

Sixth, the third paper addresses the significant impact of P-J fit on interns' intention to commit to the organisation. Prior research has associated P-J fit with job-related outcomes, and P-O fit with organisation-related outcomes (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001). The majority of these studies were conducted in a full-time employment context. For interns, the job was the main source of learning and developing professionally, thus, the match between their competencies and job requirements influenced their desire to return and accept a permanent job offer. This indicates that the job may replace the organisation as the leading target of commitment.

Finally, the findings of this research contributes significantly to the future of work research. The transformation of the work context is increasingly taking place outside the traditional organisational form (Cappelli & Keller, 2013). This cross-boundary work is increasing greatly where the organisational boundaries become more permeable such as having integrated project teams from different organisations, or more fluid such as gig employment and project networks (Kinnie & Swart, 2019). The change of work context into a temporary and cross-boundary setting is likely to increase the complexity of individuals' multiple commitments. Firstly, moving away from the standardised employee-organisation dyadic context removes the organisation from the centrality of workplace commitment. In this case, individuals may seek to substitute the organisation for other targets of commitment, because they still need to bond with someone or something such as clients, career, or work. According to this research, the job (e.g. projects, assignments) could replace the organisation as the primary target of commitment. In the traditional work context, the organisation brings employees together, where organisational commitment is their common goal. However, in various contemporary work contexts, the job is more likely to attract individuals to join the group, influence their commitment to each other, and unite them. As a result, the job could be the main influence on individuals' workplace commitment. Simultaneously, individuals are more likely to commit to the targets who they interact and are involved with regularly, such as teams, clients and business partners.

Furthermore, the absence of the institutional figure and the involvement with multiple work parties could reduce the sense of belongingness to a certain entity and increase the feelings of individuality. This could drive workers to focus on their own self-interest which could influence the motive of their commitment. For instance, they may commit to targets that will contribute to their career progression and skills development. This in turn will assist them to stay competitive in the labour market (Greenwood & Empson, 2003; Løwendahl, 2005). At the same time, individuals' commitment is expected to be a result of their conscious decision to work towards the benefit of particular targets (Klein et al., 2012). They would intentionally invest in relationships that, for example, foster their career sustainability.

Second, in the cross-boundary work context, different combinations of targets could be involved, where their relationships would be temporary in nature. This could increase the level of change in commitment to different targets, whether in the strength or the duration of the bonds. As a result,

individuals are expected to experience volatile bonds that are constantly changing according to the work conditions. The temporality of the work context could possibly increase the pace of commitment changes, which could lead to different types of dynamics of commitment.

In summary, this thesis sheds light on the dynamics of multiple commitments, to help us understand the concept of commitment in a certain context such as internships. Yet, it shows us that we still need to challenge the conceptualisation of commitment, and revisit its dynamic nature, in order for commitment literature to stay relevant in the future of work.

5.4 Practical Implications:

Organisations invest in internship programmes to recruit and select graduates. The internship gives the employers an opportunity to assess the interns in the workplace and helps them ensure that they fit with their jobs and the organisation. At the same time, it is an opportunity for interns to learn about the workplace and assess the organisation for future employment. Therefore, the research allows employers to understand how the interns are experiencing the socialisation process, and how that can affect their workplace commitment as well as their future commitment. The research also has implications for young generations that represent the future workforce.

Firstly, the research results show that interns' self-commitment (Me) was influencing their decision to commit to the workplace targets, as their commitment was based on their self-interests. Generally, interns were focusing on what they could get from working in the organisation whether in a short-term (training) or long-term (job offer). This could be the case for the younger generations as well. Prior research found that the millennial generation (born from 1981 to 2000) (Munro, 2014) are highly self-focused and endorse narcissist personality traits (Twenge, 2013; Twenge & Campbell, 2008); thus, they are known as the 'Generation Me'. They are more focused on their own needs and less committed to their employers (Buckley, Viechnicki, & Barua, 2015; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002).

Therefore, in order to recruit younger employees, organisations need to contribute to their professional and skill-development, by offering them meaningful and challenging work, development opportunities, in conjunction with an effective socialisation process. Showing them how the organisation can assist their career development could enhance their workplace commitment, and their willingness to re-join the organisation in the future.

Secondly, I argue that the job is the main influencer of the interns' organisational commitment. The internship gives the individuals the opportunity to assess their competencies and job requirements and then decide whether to accept a permanent job offer or not. Therefore, the P-J fit has the most impact on their intention to commit to the organisation in the future. Similarly, the young workers (e.g. millennials) are more interested in meaningful work experiences, beyond economic rewards; they are looking for fulfilling work (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010). In this case, it could be possible that the P-J fit would influence their commitment to the organisation as well. This could also be the case with some employment arrangements, where the job is the main element to attract and retain workers. For instance, with gig employment, people are hired on the spot for certain jobs without any assurance of future employment (Friedman, 2014). That is why the job plays an important role in retaining workers, as they are less attached to their employers (Friedman, 2014).

This has important implications for HR practices. It begins with the job design, by creating meaningful and interesting jobs that offer autonomy, skill variety, and challenging responsibilities. The job should be an opportunity for future career development. Then, the recruitment and selection process should ensure the match between individuals' abilities and skills with job demands. This could improve individuals' P-J fit, as their needs would be met by job resources. After that, effective job socialisation can facilitate development of their skills and knowledge to improve their job performance. All of that can contribute to their perception of P-J fit, which highly affects their organisational commitment.

Additionally, the importance of P-J fit could reshape how employers should brand their organisations to attract younger employees. Usually, the aim of employer branding is to promote the organisation in order to attract job seekers. The main attention has always been given to the person-organisation (P-O) fit, because of its strong association with organisational attraction (Cable & Judge, 1996; Judge & Cable, 1997). However, this research highlights the impact of the P-J fit on individuals' intention to commit to the organisation. This means, to attract and retain individuals, employers will need to increase the emphasis on the particular jobs that they are going to offer. Employer brand should promote the organisation's interesting jobs that would provide learning and career development opportunities for young workers.

Thirdly, understating the dynamic nature of commitment helps employers to influence interns' workplace commitment, which can then enhance their future commitment to the organisation. In general, it allows the managers to support the desired commitment shift, towards the desired target, to achieve the desired outcomes. For example, the data analysis reveals that 'changes in work circumstances' was the most frequent cause of commitment change. Therefore, managers can influence their employees' commitment by shifting or steadying their work conditions.

Fourthly, the research findings reveal that the immediate impact of proximal targets can influence interns' workplace commitment. Employers need to improve proximal targets' meaningful interactions with interns in order to influence their commitment. For example: assigning mentors to facilitate individuals' work adjustment, and encouraging interns to get involved with their groups, as well as embracing teamwork and knowledge sharing in the workplace. With these improvements established, a positive impact of proximal targets on interns can be increased, which can improve their commitment.

Finally, studying the OS dimensions helps us distinguish their different impacts on the socialisation outcomes (commitment). This can allow employers to support the socialisation of the dimensions according to the desired outcomes. For example, the job dimension was strongly influencing interns' future organisational commitment. This shows the importance of job socialisation in facilitating individuals learning and performing their jobs to enhance their P-J fit, which can determine their future with the organisation.

5.5 Research Limitations:

The research has some limitations that can be improved in the future. Firstly, all the participants were undergraduate students who were working in paid internships. The internship was part of a degree requirement (placement) for six of them, while for the rest it was a work experience opportunity. After the internship, most of them were returning to university to complete their studies. Consequently, there was still time to consider re-joining the organisation or to search for other opportunities, which could have an impact on their intention to commit to the organisation. In contrast, professional internships tend to be individuals who are trained and assessed during the programme with the intention of being hired to specific positions. The internship would be considered as part of the recruitment process, where individuals join the programme in order to

get a job in the organisation. Therefore, they are more likely to want to commit to the organisation and build a long-term exchange relationship with their employers. Consequently, the individuals' purpose for doing the internship could influence their motives for their present and future commitment to the organisation. Thus, it would be valuable to explore commitment in other types of internship such as professional, summer, unpaid internships, as well as voluntary internships with non-profit organisations.

Secondly, the research took place in three professional service firms (PSFs) in the UK, one financial services firm, and two engineering consultancies. There were differences in their organisational socialisation (OS) process due to their different industries (financial and engineering industries). For example, interns in the financial services firm were involved and socialising with colleagues in their department as a whole, while the engineering interns were more exclusively close to their project teams. However, I could not emphasise the differences between the organisations' socialisation process because of the limited number of participating firms. Thus, future studies could include a larger number of organisations, and extend to other industries to compare and contrast their OS and its impact on workplace commitment.

Thirdly, the interviews began in the first week of the internship, so investigating the socialisation process started when interns entered the organisation. It would be interesting to include the earlier stage of socialisation before entering the organisation (anticipatory socialisation). The interns' experience of the recruitment and selection process could be reflected in their fit perception with the organisation, as well as their pre-organisational commitment, which could then affect the development of their workplace commitment.

Finally, when participants were discussing their commitment, they were not specific about their targets of commitment. For example, they addressed their commitment to their project team members, department group, managers, and supervisors, without specifying them individually. Yet, it is possible that their commitment to different members of the group could vary in strength and duration. Therefore, studying the commitment to each target individually beyond their categories (e.g. workgroup) could help to follow the changes more precisely in their different bonds.

5.6 Future Research:

This research explores the dynamics of multiple commitments in an internship context; therefore, its importance and originality creates a foundation from which future research can progress. Firstly, the context could be extended to include other contemporary work contexts such as gig or project network workers. The type of employment could influence individuals' experience of OS and the motive of their multiple commitments. In cross-boundary work, internal and external targets could emerge and compete for a person's commitment, while the temporary setting could increase the pace of commitment change. All of that could offer new insights into the commitment concept.

Secondly, future research could investigate the consequences of the dynamics of commitment by trying to understand how the different types of commitment dynamics could impact individuals' behaviour and by identifying the influence of the bonds' strength and duration on commitment outcomes. For example, examining the impact of the unstable/stable commitment bonds on their job performance, team working, knowledge sharing, and turnover could provide a richer understanding of the implications of the dynamics of workplace commitment.

Thirdly, participants' commitment was examined on five occasions during the internship, which enabled me to follow the journey of their multiple commitments. The longitudinal aspects can be developed by examining the commitment changes on numerous occasions (e.g. weekly or monthly), to capture bonds' variations. Quantitative methods could be applied to measure the level of commitment changes and investigate a larger number of participants.

Finally, studying the socialisation dimensions (job, organisation and group) enables us to understand their different impacts on individuals' commitment. This could be extended to include the socialisation of other work entities such as supervisors, clients and professions, and examine their impact on individuals' fit perceptions and commitment. Other work contexts could also be included, where a wider number of workplace targets are involved in the workplace; such as business partners, contractors, and virtual teams.

5.7 Conclusion:

This thesis contributes to the commitment and OS literature, by addressing the impact of OS on the dynamics of interns' workplace commitment. It aims to challenge and revisit the conceptualisation of commitment in a new work context such as internships. A qualitative longitudinal study was conducted to offer an explanation of why interns commit to workplace targets. How do their multiple commitments develop, change, and end over time? How does OS contribute to the development of their commitment? And then how all of that will impact their relationship with the organisation.

This research has shown that interns' self-commitment is the main influencer on their workplace commitment. They bond with the targets that have instant benefit for them, thus, their commitment to proximal targets is more prominent than the organisational commitment. The second major finding was that commitment is a dynamic bond that changes depending on people's decision to maintain or end their bonds (Klein et al., 2012). People can experience multiple commitments with different types of dynamics, where their bonds could vary in strength and duration. Individuals' daily experiences of OS influence the changes of their commitment. At the same time, the socialisation process can shape the individuals' fit perceptions with the organisational environment, which then affects their future commitment. Lastly, the job has the most impact on interns' intention to commit to the organisation.

This thesis provides a deeper insight into the concept of commitment. It contributes to the current debates concerning the dynamic nature of commitment. It also expands our understanding of the OS role in facilitating individuals' learning about the workplace, as well as influencing the development of their commitment. Furthermore, in order to attract and retain interns, employers need to offer learning and career development opportunities. The research outcomes offer significant implications, not only for interns, but also for younger generations in general that represent the future workforce. In the end, further research is needed to understand the role played by the dynamic nature of commitment in the fast changing work environment, which would be a fruitful area for the future of work research.

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APPENDIX - INTERVIEW GUIDE

This research explores the impact of organisational socialisation (OS) on interns' dynamics of workplace commitment. To achieve this a longitudinal study was conducted, where the same group of interns was interviewed on five occasions throughout their internship programme. The semi-structured interviews were distributed among the duration of the internship, starting in the first week and ending in the last week of the programme. The aim of the interviews was to examine the influence of the individuals' experience of OS on their multiple commitments while addressing the changes of their bonds over time. The following sections will provide more explanation about the interviews and will display their main questions.

First Interview:

This interview was conducted in the first week of the internship. It aimed to outline the participants' interests, goals and expectations of the internship, as well as their experience of the socialisation process and commitment in this early stage. The main questions for this interview were as follows:

Personal
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Tell me about your study and interests.○ What is your goal for joining the programme?○ What are your expectations of the programme?○ What are your plans after (1) completing the internship, (2) getting your degree?
Internship
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Why did you apply to this company?○ So far, what do you like/dislike about the programme? Why?
Organisational Socialisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ How was the orientation programme?○ Talk to me about your job and workgroup.○ Have you had any training, meetings, social events until now? Tell me about them.
Commitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ I'd like you to outline work entities (targets) that you feel the most dedication to and responsibility for [committed to]? Why?

Second, Third, and Fourth Interviews:

These interviews were a continuation of the examination of the participants' experiences of OS and commitment during the programme. The focus was on the socialisation domains that were inspired by Taormina's domains (1997), which are training, understanding, co-worker support, and future prospects. *Training* is a process of providing employees with job skills and knowledge, whether it is formal or informal. I extended this domain to cover the learning experience in general. *Understanding* refers to newcomers learning about their roles, organisational goals, values, and culture as well as people. *Co-workers* support relates to peers' emotional or instrumental support. I expanded this domain to include others' support such as top management, supervisors, and clients. In fact, I focused here on the individuals' relationships during the socialisation process. *Future prospects* refer to individuals' anticipations of having a rewarding career within the organisation. This includes several aspects such as employer's assessment and recognition policy, salary and promotion system, as well as career development opportunities. These domains helped me to concentrate my questions on the main aspects of the OS. Additionally, the participants were asked about their jobs, projects, and assignments, besides their workplace commitment.

Organisational Socialisation	
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Have you had any training (formal, informal, online) since our last interview?○ Are you satisfied with your learning experience so far? Would you like to change anything?
Job	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Update me, if there is any modification that happened to your job (tasks).○ Who are you working with now?○ Are you satisfied with your work?○ Are you involved in other assignments (e.g. interns' project)?
Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Do you have a clear understanding of your role (tasks)?○ Do you have a clear understanding of the way your department operates? And how that could be related to other departments?○ Is there any area of the work or the organisation you need to learn about? From where can you get the required information?

Co-workers Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have you had any meetings or social events with your workgroup or other organisation members? ○ Could you describe your relationship with your group? ○ Did they offer you any kind of support? Examples. ○ What about your relationship with your manager? And did he/she offer you any support lately? Examples. ○ Tell me about your relationship with others (e.g. clients, other workgroups, and other interns)
Future Prospects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Did you receive any feedback for your work? From whom? ○ Is there any appreciation gesture or rewards for achievements in the department? Example. ○ Can you predict your future path in the company? ○ Are you aware of the compensation and reward system in the company? From where did you get this information?
Commitment	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I'd like you to outline work entities (targets) that you feel the most dedication to and responsibility for [committed to]? Why? ○ How committed are you to [your/the/this] target? Please use the response scale to identify the level of your commitment to each target. (See the response scale of commitment). ○ [If there was a change in their commitment from their last interview response, they would be asked about it.]

The Final Interview:

The final interview was conducted in the final week of the internship. The questions were similar to the earlier interviews, identifying individuals' experiences of the OS and commitment. The participants were also asked additional questions to describe their final view of the whole programme. Moreover, to determine their intention to commit to the organisation in the future, a scenario-based method was conducted. The participants were given hypothetical job offers from their organisations, to find out their willingness to return and accept a job offer. The interview questions were similar to the previous interviews, plus the following:

Internship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At the end of the internship, how do you assess your experience for the whole programme? What do you like and dislike the most?

Future Prospects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Could you tell me what do you think of the graduate employment in the company? ○ Do you think the company could offer you a career development opportunity in the future? Why?
Commitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I'd like you to outline work entities (targets) that you feel the most dedication to and responsibility for [committed to]? Why? ○ How committed are you to [your/the/this] target? Please use the response scale to identify the level of your commitment to each target. (See the response scale of commitment). ○ [If there was a change in their commitment from their last interview response, they would be asked about it.]
Intention to Commit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scenario-based method: let us assume that the organisation gave you these job offers, which one would you accept or reject and why? [See job offers templates]

The Response Scale of Commitment:

Response scale	Explanations
Extremely	I <u>strongly care</u> about the target and I freely choose to dedicate myself to exert <u>extra effort</u> to work towards its benefits.
Quite a bit	I <u>mostly care</u> about the target and I freely choose to dedicate myself to exert <u>effort</u> to work towards its benefits.
Moderately	I <u>care</u> about the target and I freely choose to dedicate myself <u>sometimes</u> to work towards its benefits.
Slightly	I <u>care a little bit</u> about the target and I freely choose to dedicate myself <u>to a certain extent</u> to work towards its benefits.
Not at all	I <u>don't care</u> about the target and I <u>don't seek to</u> work towards its benefits.

The response scale has been inspired by Klein et al.'s (2014) response format. The explanations were provided by the researcher to clarify the response scale for the participants.

Job Offer Letter Template (1)

DD/MM/YYYY

Candidate Name

Candidate Address

[Company Logo]

Dear [Candidate Name],

We would like to congratulate you for successfully completing your internship. We believe your skills and experience are an excellent match for our company. We are pleased to be able to confirm the following offer of employment.

Job title	[Same job position]
Department	[Same department]
Company's office	[Same office]
Hours	Full time
Salary	£ (amount)
Start date	DD/MM/YYYY

Please confirm your decision regarding this offer by ticking the correct box and returning this letter by [DD/MM/YYYY].

☐ Accept

☐ Reject

We would like you to join our company. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Yours sincerely,

Graduate Recruitment Office

Job Offer Letter Template (2)

DD/MM/YYYY

Candidate Name

Candidate Address

[Company Logo]

Dear [Candidate Name],

We would like to congratulate you for successfully completing your internship. We believe your skills and experience are an excellent match for our company. We are pleased to be able to confirm the following offer of employment.

Job title	[New job position]
Department	[Same department]
Company's office	[Same office]
Hours	Full time
Salary	£ (amount)
Start date	DD/MM/YYYY

Please confirm your decision regarding this offer by ticking the correct box and returning this letter by [DD/MM/YYYY].

☐ Accept

☐ Reject

We would like you to join our company. If you have any questions, please feel free contact us at any time.

Yours sincerely

Graduate Recruitment Office

Job Offer Letter Template (3)

DD/MM/YYYY

Candidate Name

Candidate Address

[Company Logo]

Dear [Candidate Name],

We would like to congratulate you for successfully completing your internship. We believe your skills and experience are an excellent match for our company. We are pleased to be able to confirm the following offer of employment.

Job title	[New job position]
Department	[New department]
Company's office	[Same office]
Hours	Full time
Salary	£ (amount)
Start date	DD/MM/YYYY

Please confirm your decision regarding this offer by ticking the correct box and returning this letter by [DD/MM/YYYY].

☐ Accept

☐ Reject

We would like you to join our company. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Yours sincerely,

Graduate Recruitment Office

Job Offer Letter Template (4)

DD/MM/YYYY

Candidate Name

Candidate Address

[Company Logo]

Dear [Candidate Name],

We would like to congratulate you for successfully completing your internship. We believe your skills and experience are an excellent match for our company. We are pleased to be able to confirm the following offer of employment.

Job title	[Insert your preferable choice]
Department	[Insert your preferable choice]
Company's office	[Insert your preferable choice]
Hours	Full time
Salary	£ (amount)
Start date	DD/MM/YYYY

Please confirm your decision regarding this offer by ticking the correct box and returning this letter by [DD/MM/YYYY].

☐ Accept

☐ Reject

We would like you to join our company. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Yours sincerely,

Graduate Recruitment Office